

PLAY



The UK's bestselling indie magazine

ISSUE NO 210
SO
SOLID
CREW

INTERVIEW

MASS EFFECT 3

BioWare 'must address concerns'

FIRST LOOK

DEVIL MAY CRY

All the big changes exposed

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METAL GEAR SOLID

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Resistance, Uncharted, more

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One-man studio shares inside info

exclusive
INFINITY WARD
INSIDE ACCESS

Incredible photos of a studio reborn

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FROM THE CREATORS



WINNER OF MORE THAN 20 E3 AWARDS



"OFFICIALLY THE BEST LOOKING GAME WE HAVE EVER SEEN"

PLAY

SCAN FOR EXTRA CONTENT



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PS3
PlayStation 3



Bethesda

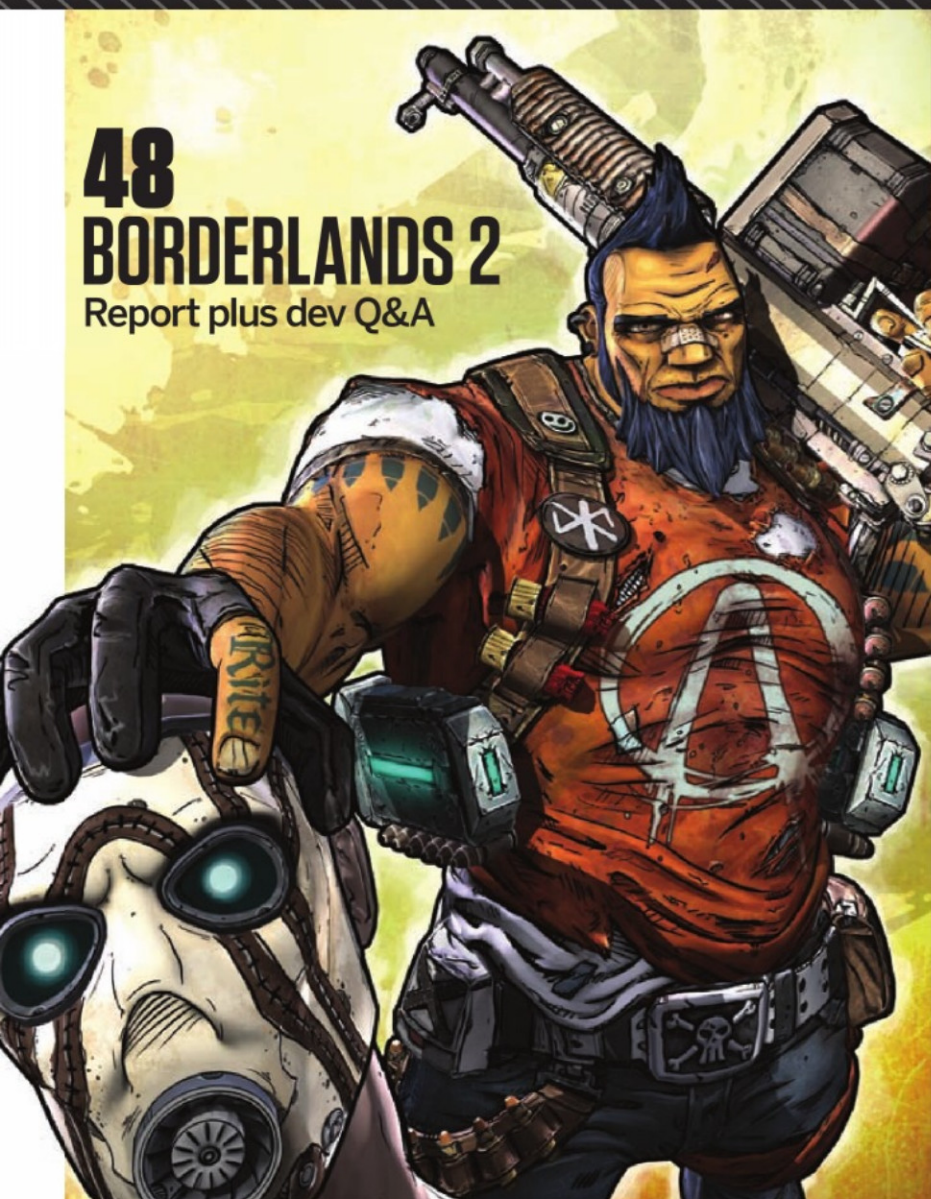
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There's no longer an excuse not to play these games. Go! Now!

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Don't call it a comeback, as LL Cool J once sang about PES.

83 FIFA 12 PS3

Don't call it a comeback. Because it's not. It was better last year.

84 Dead Island PS3

It's as emotional as cold chips but is it actually any good? Or is it at least better than cold chips?

88 Bodycount PS3

They called it a super explosive gungasm, or something like that. We just call it boring.

90 God Of War Collection: Vol II PS3

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92 Splinter Cell Trilogy HD PS3

If you... Oh. Another old game. We're turning into Retro Gamer.

93 NHL 12 PS3

[Obligatory reference to how good NHL on MegaDrive was].

94 Warhammer 40k: Space Marine PS3

Depressingly, disappointingly, somewhat predictably average.

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98 Medal Of Honor: Frontline

Times have changed. This hasn't.

98 The Baconing

Nothing to do with bacon butties, so it's lost a lot of points there.

99 Resident Evil 4 HD

One of the best games ever, according to Ryan. Shoot, kick, shoot, kick, according to Dan.

99 Crazy Machines Elements

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99 Comix Zone

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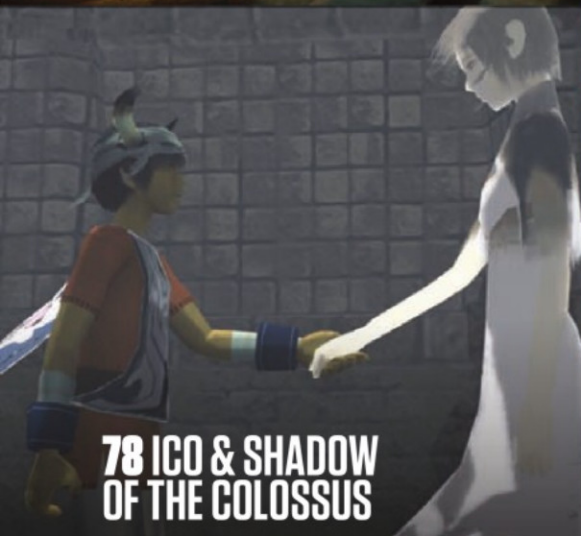


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84 DEAD ISLAND

Hit or hype? Well...



78 Ico & Shadow of the Colossus



94 WARHAMMER 40K: SPACE MARINE

So very, very average

59 Battlefield 3 **PS3**

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60 FIFA Street **PS3**

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61 WWE '12 **PS3**

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- Prototype 2
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- SSX

high-def trailers

Trailers in sparkly high definition!

- Assassin's Creed Revelations
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- Dark Souls
- Devil May Cry
- Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus
- Soul Calibur V
- SSX
- Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception
- Uncharted: Golden Abyss

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Wallpapers, software and movies to watch on your PS3 and PSP!

PS3/PSP Wallpapers & Themes

PS3 wallpapers and themes

Play Podcast

Catch up on what the Play team has been rambling about

PC Software

FilemanagerPSP, iSPMMovieLoader, Lumox, PSPWare

PSP Movies

Watch all the latest PSP trailers on your PSP!

PlayStation 3 PSN PSVita PSP 演劇端末

Welcome PLAY

The UK's best independent PlayStation magazine

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Then make sure you've
played these gems.

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We're going to make
one about attacking
people with wasps.

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28 METAL GEAR SOLID: 68 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW

Series torn apart for fresh secrets...

We made Dan
count all 68 facts.
At least four times.
He hates Play
now. Sorry Dan.
Whoops?

Unleash the dogs



The games
rush has
begun. *Deus
Ex: Human*

Revolution was the
dam creaking and
now it's burst, with a

collection of monster titles tumbling
forth. That's right, *Champion Jockey* is
finally here!

And so is *Resistance 3*, *Ico & Shadow
Of The Colossus*, *PES 2012*, *FIFA 12*,
Dead Island... there are 22 pages of
reviews this month. The games rush
has begun and more importantly, we
already have some incredible games
with *Resistance 3* coming through
against the odds and *Ico & Shadow Of
The Colossus* ensuring PlayStation 3
owners don't miss out on two of the
best games of the last-gen.

But it's not all reviews. We talk to Cold
Beam Games to find out how one man
managed to get his game released on
PSN, so perhaps your dream of having
the world play '*Bucky Blue-Mouth: The
Peasant's Revenge*' or whatever your
imagination has cooked up isn't as far
away as you thought.

We also pry apart the *Metal Gear
Solid* series by looking at the best
secrets to date, talking to some of
the people involved in its making and
pooling our own collective knowledge.

And don't think the games rush will
be dying down anytime soon – we've
got the exclusive review of *Saints Row:
The Third* next issue and if it's anything
like the criminally underrated *Saints
Row 2*, then the fun is just starting...

Enjoy the issue.

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work at facebook.com/
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PlayStation 3



XBOX 360

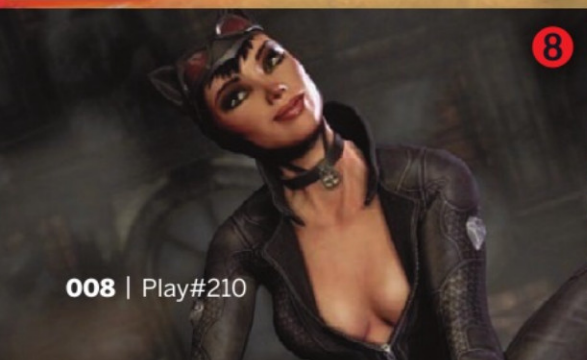
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INSTALL

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth



twitterwatch



@davidscottjaffe
Just got done playing
DoodleDice! Man that's a GREAT
family game! Great risk/reward
design at almost every turn!

@PlayMag_UK says: We're
jealous of the Twisted Metal creator. We only
play X360's Sam Bandah at Street Fighter.
All reward, no risk. It's like fighting a child.



Uncharted bigger than Blu-ray

While *Uncharted 2* "barely made it to 25GB", the third in the series is "going over 50GB this time." Naughty Dog's Arne Meyer told *Play*. Wow. "If you're going over 50, then I guess you'll have to be on multiple discs. But we'll be under 50. We'll be one disc."



Street Fighter X Tekken Kuma 'least balanced'

"To be honest, he's one of the least balanced characters," Capcom's Seth Killian admitted. "Someone came up to me and they were like, 'oh, I found a bug!' Kuma and Raven, when they whiff moves, they don't build meter. And I was like, we've only put them in! [laughs]"



Skyrim has same sex marriage

"You can marry anyone," said Bethesda marketing boss Pete Hines on *Elder Scrolls: Skyrim*. "Sorry, should clarify. Not any NPC, just mean any male or female. Doesn't matter what you're playing." Brilliant! *Play*'s dreams of lizard on lizard action lives on.

10 things we've learned about PLAYSTATION 3

The nuggets of wisdom *Play*'s roving reporters have exchanged with us for gold

1 Why Counter-Strike will be badass on PS3

"We haven't seen *Counter-Strike* on consoles since 2003, so we invited lots of the pro players to Valve and we asked them what they liked best about *Counter-Strike 1.6* and *Counter-Strike Source*. So we're planning to take the best of both games and make it better."

Gabe Newell, Valve (*Counter-Strike: Global Operation*)

2 Modern Warfare 3 vs Battlefield 3

"I don't think it has to be a competition between any two titles. We compete with ourselves. We want to make sure the fans view *Modern Warfare 3* as a worthy successor to *Modern Warfare 2*. We all pour our hearts into this to make sure it's the biggest, best game possible. So that's where most of the drive comes from."

Michael Condrey, Sledgehammer Games (*Modern Warfare 3*)

3 Dante 'like young people today'

"Dante is much more aggressive, angry, and much more of a street brawler. A lot of this is about how Dante becomes the way he is and why he's so angry at the world. There's a lot of satire on this game. He's a lot like young people today, no prospects... he's very angry."

Tameem Antoniades, Ninja Theory (*DmC*)

4 No Witcher 2 on PS3... yet

"We would like to see the game on PlayStation and we'd like to deliver it to those players. But we can't do everything at the same time and it's a little more difficult than the Xbox version for us. Maybe if we have more manpower it would be a little bit easier."

Marek Ciemak, CD Projekt (*The Witcher 2*)

5 Tekken X Street Fighter is undermanned

"We only have a few people researching *Tekken X Street Fighter*, myself and two other people. The rest of us are working on the arcade version of *Tekken Tag Tournament 2*. That's going to wrap up pretty soon, then we'll shift across. So there's between 30 and 40 core staff on the team but we ramp it up to 100 depending on the project we're working on."

Katushiro Harada, Namco Bandai (*Tekken X Street Fighter*)

6 Joe Danger beat the odds

"Believe it or not, having made a PSN game, all of *Joe Danger 1* was made using one dev kit that was shared by all of us."

Sean Murray, Hello Games (*Joe Danger: The Movie*)

7 Internet beats retail

"You look at the charts, all you see is huge games in retail. It costs a lot of money for retailers to keep boxes. Three years ago, you could have a box staying on the shelf for five weeks. Now, after two weeks, if your game is not sold, out of retail. The good thing about the internet is you can sell your game for a long time."

Djamil Kemal, Lexis Numerique (*Amy*)

8 Arkham City is huge

"We have the single-player game, and I reckon your first play through the narrative would take about the 20-25 hour mark. On top of that, if you want 100 per cent complete – which is finding all 400 of the Riddler trophies, all the cameos and doing everything – we reckon it's about 40 hours plus."

Paul Crocker, Rocksteady Studios (*Batman: Arkham City*)

9 BioWare's core values

"This industry is one of the most interesting in the world because of that dynamic nature but it's those core values that ground us at the same time. Focus on your staples. Focus on your customers. Focus on your employees. Focus on your investors. All of those things are equally weighted. Never lose sight of that. Never lose sight of the fans that keep you in business. You're only as good as your next game."

Ray Muzyka, BioWare

10 Heskey is back

"I don't know if he'll be doing nutmegs but Heskey will be in *FIFA Street*, yeah."

Gary Patterson, EA (*FIFA Street*)





INSTALL

YOUR SHOUT MASS EFFECT 3

1. @AARONTEHCREATOR Hot

2. @MRMASONXD Show me
FemShep!

3. @ASTROMONKEY1980 Not
enough stubble

facebook [.com/playmagazineuk](https://www.facebook.com/playmagazineuk)

Ruairi Kennedy Would've liked black hair but oh well, it looks good.

Paul Jones Crap. Generic Gothic clichéd hotty. Has to be more school teacher-esque to be authoritarian.

Katie Glaister I like it. I know a lot of people got really pissy when she was gonna be a blonde but I like her as a redhead, it suits her I think. Plus people seem to forget that you don't actually need to use the default look, so I don't get why they acted like they did when she was gonna be a blonde.

Richard Bezoteaux I couldn't give a crap. I'll be carrying my male Shep over from ME 2!

twitterwatch

It's easy to feature in Play. We demand opinions on @PlayMag_UK and then we print them. Share your opinions! Without swearing, thank you. We get enough of that from our bosses.

INSTANT EXPERT

All of the pros with none of the prose

ARE WE GETTING IT?

A few years ago this would have been unlikely to come out in the UK. Luckily Warner Bros. has picked up the rights to *Lollipop Chainsaw* and we'll indeed be getting the game over here.

THE BEST/WORST OF BOTH WORLDS

We're still confused as to our actual feelings towards the game right now. On one hand it shows the absolute worst of games: mindless blood and gore, sexy young girl in skimpy outfit. On the other hand, it's being made by Grasshopper. It'll clearly be great.

FLUENTIAL (IN)

Juliet goes to San Romero High School – legendary zombie movie director George Romero's last name is... well, figure it out. We've also had the S-bomb dropped on us by Grasshopper, with *Shaun Of The Dead* name-checked. Wear your influences, and all that.

SHOW US YOUR GUNNS

The dialogue and story are being written by James Gunn, director of the excellently dark *Super* and the excellently funny *PG Porn*. It would surely be a funny and dark experience anyway, but Gunn's involvement ratchets it up a bit.

WHAT THE WHAT?!

Right, so, the thing is... hmmm. Yeah. It's another eccentric one, that's for sure. You play as one Juliet Starling – a cheerleader by day and zombie hunter by night – as you take on legions of the undead. Accompanied by your boyfriend. Who is a disembodied head.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

We haven't seen them yet, but Juliet doesn't bust undead backside on her own. No, she's part of a family of zombie botty-kickers. Does this mean co-op? Team multiplayer? Why not ask Juliet on Twitter: @julietstarling.

PUNK'S UNDEAD

Grasshopper is a studio that embraces a punk rock ethos. *Lollipop Chainsaw* will be no different, with characters like Zed, a classic 'Anarchy In The UK'-style punk zombie showing up. That's an exclusive right there.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Shadows Of The Damned was well-received, but sold about seven copies worldwide. Does this mean *Lollipop Chainsaw* will be watered down for mass-market acceptance? Not a chance. As Grasshopper told us: "If we continue to follow our path the fans will come."

LOLLIPOP CHAINSAW

Developer Grasshopper Manufacture
Publisher Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment • ETA 2012

twitterwatch



@pg_kamiya

"Ok. RT @kadosho: @PG_kamiya Dr Who is a sci-fi series, about a time lord who journeys through time and space."

@PlayMag_UK says:

Bayonetta designer Hideki Kamiya answers all tweets with either a confused face or 'ok'. Tweet him a question. Seriously. Do it.

DOS & DON'TS

Important lessons from Play this month



DO: Get excited about *Rock Of Ages* coming out on PSN later this year. Rubbish name but brilliant game. You'll see. Oh yes. You'll see.



DON'T: Expect EA's *NHL 2012* to be that much different from previous versions of the game. Still a lot of fun, mind.



DO: Play *Dead Island* with others. It's like a day at the beach. Depressing on your own, fun with others. Not as much ice cream involved.



DON'T: Entirely write off the chance of *WWE '12* being half-decent just yet. At least wait until our review for that.

Read our reviews of all these games starting on page 73

QUESTION

Did the Ace Combat series need a reboot?



Ace Combat: Assault Horizon has people all in a tizzy about how super-fun it looks. *Call Of Duty* of the skies, the less-creative have shouted (we may be guilty of this, too). But did the *Ace Combat* series even need such a reboot? Let's take a look back at some previous entries to the series and figure this one out...

Air Combat

The original game, before we all adopted the original title worldwide, was a very simple, very arcadey game. Oh, and the aircraft liveries were awful. Very much a product of its time.



Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere

This was overlooked by many, set as it was in a near-future world of experimental (and entirely made-up) planes. While it was a good game, it didn't do much for the series as a whole.



Ace Combat: Distant Thunder

It wasn't a huge reboot like *Assault Horizon*, but it was a different direction for the series. An approach we still appreciate today, and one that up until *Assault Horizon* Namco was all too happy to try to replicate. And fail at replicating, truth be told.



Ace Combat 6: Fires Of Liberation

Did not come out on PS3, hence we did not care. Sorry.



Ace Combat: Joint Assault

It was pretty much the same game for about the 50th time, but this one at least mixed it up with some co-op multiplayer. Shame nobody in the world knows anybody else that owns a PSP, really.



ANSWER:

Yes. It did need a reboot



The BioWare Boss



Dragon Age III? BioWare CEO Dr Ray Muzyka talks the next Dragon Age title, Mass Effect 3 concerns and shuts us down on Mass Effect 3 multiplayer...

Following *Mass Effect 2*, some fans are worried that *Mass Effect 3* will lean towards shooting over RPG. Are those concerns valid?

I think the perception is that they want more RPG elements. We have to address that and the thing is, we are. We took that feedback to heart. As great a game as *Mass Effect 2* is, and we're really proud of it, there's always opportunity to improve. So in *Mass Effect 3*, we're improving the moment-to-moment action. We are improving that but we are also improving the RPG elements too so there's more customisation, aggression options, more interesting choices, the tactical choices, the weapon modification... you can make Shepard the way you want him to be. That personalisation, along with choice, is really the essence of RPGs. *Mass Effect 3* has that in spades.

As *Mass Effect 3* is the first game in the series that's multiplatform from day one, has that changed things for BioWare at all?

No. I think we're pretty used to the system now. So we're really excited to develop it for Xbox, Xbox Kinect, PlayStation 3, PC... having had the consumer feedback with all those platforms, we can make the next version even better. So from a development perspective, the team's pretty familiar with them. They've had it planned right from the beginning of development for all the different systems, all the different interfaces are really polished. Things are tracking really well.

Onto *Dragon Age II* – we know you've previously stated you complete all BioWare games before they're released. Given you've played through *Dragon Age II*, were you surprised by the reaction to it?

We were somewhat surprised. I think we got a polarised response and it was a surprise to us because on the one hand, we attracted a lot of new fans. The innovations were applauded, the combat, the story-telling, the gameplay, they were really exciting and fun. We were delighted to see that.

On the other hand, we also realised there were fans who were expecting more of the things we did in *Dragon Age: Origins*. We have to really make sure we take the core fans along with us on our journey, so we've taken that feedback to heart. One of our core values is humility, and that means listening to our fans seriously and also trying to improve.

We haven't announced the next *Dragon Age* yet but I'll tell you, the team that's working on the *Dragon Age* universe, what they're trying to do is take the innovations of *Dragon Age II* but also we'll be back at *Dragon Age: Origins*, too, and say, what do we need to bring from that, too, that the core fans really, really are passionate about? How can we combine them? How can we marry them and get the best of both worlds?

When we're ready to announce that, we'll give you more details. We're taking it seriously. We're taking it really seriously. When we polarise our fans, that's something that doesn't sit well with us. Trust me. So we're going to do our best to make sure all of our fans are satisfied with a high-quality experience.

Finally, we've recently done a Q&A with Casey Hudson who says BioWare thought about multiplayer in *Mass Effect* and *Mass Effect 2*. Obviously there's been a lot of talk of multiplayer in *Mass Effect 3*. Are you surprised it's been such a focal point?

It's good to know people find that concept exciting.

So can you comment on multiplayer in *Mass Effect 3*?

We don't comment on rumours.

INFILTRATING INFINITY WARD

Play goes behind the scenes with the developer of the World's Biggest Game (™), and asks the tough questions as it does so: why is Rob Bowling's office so messy? Should replica pistols really be just lying around? And is Infinity Ward working on a new AVP game?



1 THEY SEE ME, BOWLING, THEY HATIN'... Here's Rob Bowling, Infinity Ward's creative strategist and all around spokesman, relaxing in his office. Well, we say relaxing; we mean grinning manically as he realises that the world's press now think his office needs a good tidy up. Possibly.



2 SOMETHING YOU'RE NOT TELLING US? Wait, what's this? Expensive busts of an Alien and Predator? At a developer known for making first-person shooters? This surely can only mean one thing... IW is making a new AVP game! Or not: it has loads of stuff lying around for reference.



3 TROPHY HUNTING Look at that trophy cabinet: there's more bling in there than three whole seasons of *Cribs* fronted by Mr T. There's some Baftas present, but most of the awards are from gaming publications, sites and there's even – terrifyingly – one from an actual special forces unit. It's a savage-looking knife with an inscription on it. Of course!



4 TAKING A BITE OUT OF THE COMPETITION We've got to say, our tour around IW's offices was conspicuous by its lack of staff. Still, at least we got to see this *Pac-Man* mural that someone adorned this wall with. Hey, you've got to spend the billions somehow right?



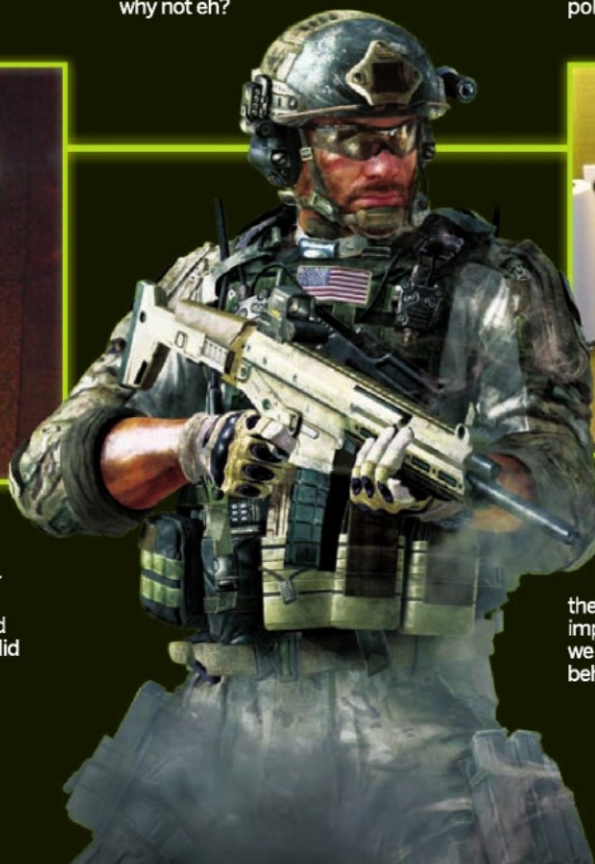
5 HOLLYWOOD SWINGIN' Here's Infinity Ward's theatre room, where the team kick back to watch movies or preview the upcoming trailers for their games. We also like to think that sometimes they watch an infographic of their own wealth going through the roof with this thing, because why not eh?



6 MASSAGE THERAPY When you're in the high-stakes world of making the biggest thing ever, it pays to relax a little bit now and then. Enter this massage chair. There are a few of these dotted around the office complex, although sadly we didn't have a go on any, because we're polite like that.



7 NAME ON THE DOOR Here's the entrance to Infinity Ward's office. Pretty lowkey, right? Where's all the bling? Why isn't there a butler there to let us in and hand us some champagne and peeled grapes? And why isn't this plaque made out of solid gold? We can but only wonder.



8 ADDICTIVE SUBSTANCES We've all been there: as playboy millionaires, working hard on entertainment beloved by all, we need to kick back every now and then. Here, Infinity Ward shows off its impressive collection of alcohol. Not that we recommend or endorse that sort of behaviour though, because it isn't cool, kids.

MISLEADING TRAILERS

Trailers are wonderful things. They're essentially great big fat lies created to make sure you buy stuff that isn't anywhere near as good as it's made out to be. Here's five of the best/worst

Dead Island *Dead Island* is out now (see review on page 84), and as good as it is you'd be hard-pushed to find anyone who thinks it's even remotely similar to that teaser trailer. Said trailer depicted the harrowing account of a family torn apart by a zombie uprising. The game is about hacking people's arms off and nicking their money.



Metal Gear Solid 2 When Kojima's not writing insane dialogue, he's partly responsible for trailers that feature footage that doesn't exist in-game. Not wanting to give away the fact you'd have to play most of *MGS 2* as some girly-man, he sanctioned a trailer showing Snake fighting a Harrier plane on the George Washington bridge. Which totally happened, yeah?



PES 2011 Not misleading per se, more bloody irritating. The teaser for *PES 2011*, instead of showing some actual game footage, shows a render of Lionel Messi doing some tricks while insane nonsense floats around next to him. All set to a black background. Go football!



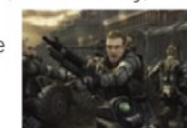
Resident Evil 5 Back when this was first announced Capcom was telling everyone how the searing African heat would affect Chris Redfield's physical and mental state. The trailer attempts to depict this, with Chris squinting into the sun before hallucinating enemies.

The full game, however, seems to be a bad hallucination where Capcom included a co-op partner with no brains. Oh.



Killzone 2 The champion of BS CGI trailers masquerading as real-time footage, there's not a single person that thought that this was real. Well, apart from the fanboys obviously.

Fortunately for Sony, Guerrilla delivered the goods, at least visually, with *Killzone 2*. Because otherwise that would have been really embarrassing.



INSTALL

Why... SURVIVAL HORROR DIED

The genre has shifted towards action and Amy's creator tells us why...



● **RESIDENT EVIL:** Rocket launchers and co-op? Nah.

"FEAR IS REALLY hard to create; especially as several good games have already used many tricks players now know by heart," laments Paul Cusset, creator of *Amy*, the upcoming PSN survival-horror game that puts the emphasis on... well, surviving and horror.



● **SILENT HILL:** Series doesn't scare like before.

"It's also a marketing approach: the FPS market is clearly larger than the survival-horror market. This pushes the marketing guys to have the developers creating horror games that appeal to FPS fans. And if we look at the figures from their perspective, that makes sense. *Dead Space* sells more than *Silent Hill*..."



● **DEAD ISLAND:** Action co-op, not survival horror.

"But I strongly believe that there are many gamers who still want slower games, with less combat and more atmosphere," continues Cusset. "And it's precisely what we're trying to do with *Amy*. I think fear is one of the most difficult things to create when you do a game. Getting into how we did it would be somewhat of a spoiler. But as you can expect, we paid a lot of attention to music and sound design. Another element I can give you is that the enemies are not always when you expect them to be, even when you retry after you've died!"



VALUE FOR MONEY

Quick guide to collector's editions and pre-order bonuses...



Battlefield 3 – Limited Edition

FROM: Gamestation

COST: £39.99

RELEASE DATE: 28 October

The Physical Warfare Pack is the pre-order bonus. You get the Return To Karkand map pack but also a variety of exclusive weapons – flash suppressor for the SKS sniper rifle, DAO-12 shotgun along with flechette ammo and Type 88 LMG with bipod.



The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim – Collector's Edition

FROM: Play.com COST: £129.99 RELEASE: 11 November

If you have more money than sense, then you get a 12-inch tall Alduin Statue, 200-page 'Art Of Skyrim' artbook and a making-of DVD. Bit embarrassing compared to the *Dark Souls* package, if we're being honest. And by GOD we're nothing but honest.



Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception

FROM: Play.com

COST: £38.99

RELEASE: 2 November

Exclusive multiplayer content is your pre-order reward here. The Regeneration Booster just boosts your healing power, which sounds boring, while Creepy Crawler Kickback turns you into a 'swarm of deadly creatures'. Erm, wait. What?



Batman: Arkham City Collector's Edition

FROM: Game COST: £59.99 RELEASE DATE: 21 October

One of the better deals. You get a Batman statue, artbook, *Batman: Gotham Knight* animated movie, *Arkham City* album and 'early access' to Iceberg Lounge Challenge Map and Dark Knight Returns skin for your dosh. Bloody hell.

Modern Warfare 3 – Hardened Edition

FROM: Shopto.net COST: £78.85

RELEASE: 8 November

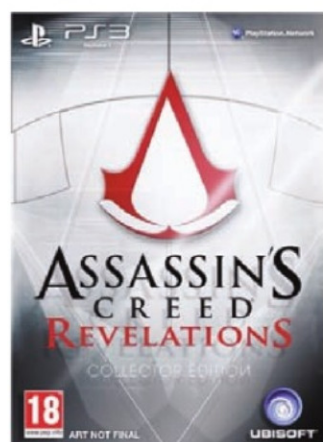
A year of COD Elite membership, Founder Status on Elite (which gets you 'exclusive benefits'), field journal, Special Ops Juggernaut theme and premium case is what your money gets you here. Pricey package given the contents.



Saints Row: The Third – Professor Genki Edition

FROM: Game COST: £39.99 RELEASE DATE: 18 November

If you pre-order, you get Professor Genki's goodies. That means stunt suit for skydiving, Octopus which turns enemies to your side and best of all, the Man-a-pult, which sucks people up and fires them out of a massive cannon. Good fun.



Assassin's Creed Revelations

FROM: Play.com

COST: £49.89

RELEASE: 15 November

We're ignoring the 'break the Assassin seal to unveil its contents.' Opening a box isn't a special feature. Otherwise, here's what's within – soundtrack, artbook, an animated short, two extra multiplayer characters and Vlad the Impaler prison plus weapon. Not bad.



Dark Souls – Limited Edition

FROM: Zawi.com COST: £36.85

RELEASE DATE: 7 October

The Limited Edition costs standard price, which makes this the best bargain here. Along with the game you get a Making-Of DVD (boring), artwork (better), soundtrack CD (awesome) and game guide (PRICELESS).

www.imagineshop.co.uk



FROM THE ASHES OF THQ

When THQ Digital closed down, some of its talented art folks formed Alien Apple Studios, an artwork company which gives us an excuse to make this page look pretty. Ooh. Pretty

Play recently caught up with the folks at Alien Apple Studios, a new startup in the north west of England formed following the closure of THQ Digital. We asked them some questions, they gave us some answers. Still, it's the lovely artwork surrounding these words that's the *really* interesting part. Because it's lovely, mainly. Have the words anyway, though. You know, context and all that.

JUSTIFY YOURSELVES

“Collectively we have nearly 50 years experience in the games industry and have worked on games in every genre and on every major console format over the past 15 years.”



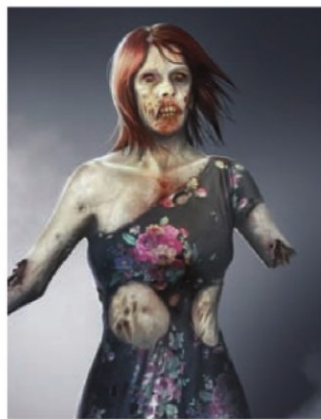
TELL US YOUR HOPES

“At a basic level I think we want to just be successful in what we do and build a truly creative studio that hopefully inspires others down the line to follow in our footsteps.”



WHY START A NEW COMPANY?

“We saw our old studio closure as fate playing a hand and presenting us with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to really get out there and show people what we are really capable of, especially as a collective.”



SMALL STUDIOS: THE FUTURE?

“Big game budgets are spiralling and studios need big hits to cover the costs of creating those games, for medium-sized studios, games that don't pull in the required sales figures can mean the end of the studio. We can see we're moving slowly towards mirroring the Hollywood model of film production which involves hiring staff for each movie and then those staff move off onto another project once it's completed.”

EAST vs WEST

Are JRPGs dying at the hands of Western RPGs?

JRPGS HAVE FALLEN on hard times this gen, or so it seems. Rather than moan about it on a Play-Mag.co.uk blog, we asked Ross Brierley of Ghostlight (*Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3*) who says only perception has changed.

“The overall market has grown for JRPGs but casual sector growth distorts the statistics. We recently got *Persona 3 Portable* to the top of the PSP charts over the top of several core franchises, which shows the appetite's still very much there for JRPGs.”

Are Western RPGs taking over from JRPGs? “Western development as a whole seems to have become more console-orientated and this has included the Western RPGs. I'm not sure this has had a huge impact commercially, I'm not aware of too many people who've stopped buying JRPGs because they can get Western ones on their console instead.”

To finish, he added: “Until JRPGs start selling millions of units over here, I'm afraid you'll never see us selling radio-controlled cars or night-vision goggles, but we do like to include things people will enjoy.” So now you know.



Charts

Cataloguing everything that's big in the world of PlayStation

PS3 CHART

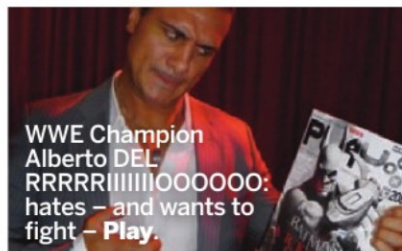
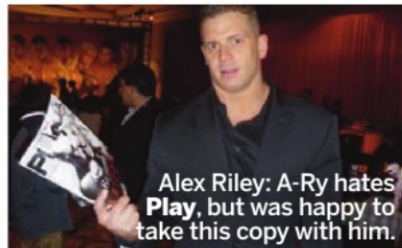
1	FIFA 12 EA Sports Unsurprisingly, FIFA has taken the charts by storm, and it will stay here for a long time to come. 86%
2	Deus Ex: Human Revolution Square Enix Deservedly holding on, Eidos Montreal's near-future thriller still has its hooks in us. 91%
3	Call Of Duty: Black Ops Activision Black Ops has clearly been bolstered by the release of a new map pack and the impending sequel. 94%
4	Dead Island Deep Silver Seems all the hype in the world based on a trailer that's nothing to do with the game <i>does</i> work. 79%
5	Driver: San Francisco Ubisoft Not the rousing return to form we'd hoped for, but not an entirely bad game either. 68%
6	Resistance 3 Sony Another solid, if unspectacular entry to the <i>Resistance</i> series – arguably the best one yet. 88%
7	Bodycount Codemasters It disappeared off our radar, but now it's out and... we don't have much more to say about it, really. 54%
8	Ico & SOTC Classics HD Sony This time you know about them and they have a reputation and please, please just buy them. 94%
9	inFamous 2 Sony Slowly making its way out of the charts, <i>inFamous 2</i> has had a strong run. 83%
10	Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine THQ One for the hardcore fans and not much else. 51%

PSP CHART

1	FIFA 12 EA A change in the PSP chart! Granted, it's the old version of a game replaced with the new one, but still. NA%
2	Final Fantasy IV: Complete Collection Square Enix A lovely little collection of <i>FF</i> titles and ideal to while away some time. 80%
3	Football Manager 2011 Sega Soon to be replaced with <i>FM2012</i> , we're sure. Wonder if Sega will release new versions on Vita? NA%
4	Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable Atlus It took years to come out but it was worth the wait. 78%
5	Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy Square Enix Another non-mover in the increasingly redundant PSP charts. We feel for you, little handheld. We do. 79%

*This chart is compiled from sales, our opinions and the games you're playing. If you're playing a recent, quality title that isn't on our chart, head on over to the forum and let us know about it.

THE STARS OF WWE '12 HATE PLAY, AS WE FOUND OUT



Alright, so it's been out about a month by now, but it's worth talking about how confusing an experience this is. See, on one hand it's great – it's *DeathSpank* again, and the first two *Spank* titles were great, compulsive looting, fun. But third time around it's started to feel a bit stale – a bit weaker than before. Even though it's the same thing again, and offers almost exactly the same highs and lows. See what we mean about confusing? It's still not as funny as it could be, mind.

THE BIG RELEASE



11 November
**THE ELDER
SCROLLS V:
SKYRIM**

It seems the ancient land of Tamriel is a far more progressive place than many US states, allowing as it does anybody to marry anybody, regardless of gender, race and whatever else. Obviously that's not the main reason to buy *Skyrim*. And we still don't think you can marry a dragon. No, the main reason to buy the latest chapter of the *Elder Scrolls* saga will be because **JUST LOOK AT IT**. We cannot wait to lose ourselves in this for about 300 hours. If it ends up bad, something horrible went wrong, no doubt.

RELEASELIST

It's all about "making awesome easy", says EA

Dark Souls
NBA 2K12
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship
MotionSports Adrenaline
Just Dance 3
Rocksmith
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record
Pro Evolution Soccer 2012
Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time
Batman: Arkham City
Medieval Moves: Deadmund's Quest
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One
The Adventures Of Tintin
The Sims 3: Pets
King Of Fighters XIII
Battlefield 3
Combat Wings: The Great Battles Of WWII
Dragon Ball Z Ultimate Tenkaichi
House Of The Dead: Overkill
Silent Hill HD Collection
Half-Minute Hero 2 (PSP)
Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Impact (PSP)

The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3
Silent Hill: Downpour
EyePet & Friends
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
WWE '12
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection
uDraw Studio: Instant Artist
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3
Sonic Generations
Disgaea 4: A Promise Unforgotten
Assassin's Creed Revelations
Saints Row: The Third
Need For Speed: The Run
Rayman Origins

DECEMBER

Hunter's Trophy
2012
Inversion
The Darkness II
Mass Effect 3
XCOM

DECEMBER

Hunter's Trophy
2012
Inversion
The Darkness II
Mass Effect 3
XCOM

DmC
Starhawk
BioShock: Infinite
Aliens: Colonial Marines
Far Cry 3
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Future Soldier
Street Fighter X Tekken
Armored Core 5
Asura's Wrath
Binary Domain
Neverdead
SSX
UFC: Undisputed 3
Brothers In Arms: Furious 4
Resistance: Burning Skies
Uncharted: Golden Abyss
Everybody's Golf Vita
Sound Shapes
WipEout 2048
Little Deviants
Hustle Kings Vita
ModNation Racers Vita
Reality Fighters
Super Stardust Delta
LittleBigPlanet Vita

FORWARD PLANNER OCTOBER 2011

"Gabe Newell - everyone knows he was in The Beatles" - Darran Jones

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
01 EVERTON V LIVERPOOL Otherwise known as 'Merseyside Blue vs Merseyside Red'. 	02	03	04		06	07 JOHNNY ENGLISH REBORN The film is clearly going to be ass mixed with more ass, but it's just nice to see Rowan Atkinson back on the big screen. No, really - it is. 
15 A GAME OF THRONES: THE BOARD GAME Well it doesn't look like any games based on this are coming to PS3, so you might as well go old-school for your Sean Bean-style entertainment. 	16    	10	11	19	13 NOTTINGHAM 'ROBIN HOOD' BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL If you're old enough (and near Nottingham) why not drop by and taste delicious beers and ciders, while hanging around with nerds even nerdier than gamer nerds - beer nerds.	21 BATMAN: ARKHAM CITY Catwoman, Two-Face, Penguin and co suit up for the hyped sequel. 
29	23	24 JURASSIC PARK TRILOGY - BLU-RAY Der der der der derr, der der der der derr, der der derr... oh, Jurassic Park. You're still brilliant.			28 BATTLEFIELD 3 Or you could get <i>GoldenEye: Reloaded</i> , which is out on the same day. LOL.	
	30	31 HALLOWEEN This isn't us recommending you take part in this Americanised nonsense - we're just highlighting its existence. Sigh.				

PSN HEAT BAR!

FREEZING: BURNOUT CRASH!

You know what? It'll probably end up being alright. If not really entertaining. But what we've seen of *Crash* so far hasn't exactly set our world afire.

COLD: COUNTER-STRIKE: GLOBAL OFFENSIVE

Mouse and keyboard controls make us happy, but it's hard to think this will have much success on PSN. It's PC through and through - we're not sure there's an audience here.

WARM: ODDWORLD: STRANGER'S WRATH HD

Not to sound too arrogant, but you probably missed *Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD* first time around on Xbox. It was, as they say, bloody brilliant. Don't miss out a second time.

HOT: SONIC CD

It's one of the best *Sonic* games and we've had some blabbing about the soundtrack, too, so it makes us happy. Or something.



WHY 'GAME X VS GAME Y' THINKING DESERVES TO DIE

Stop being crazy, people. We can all live in harmony



HOW OLD ARE you? The members of **Play** are 27 or older: not ancient by any means, but we've been around videogames long enough – all of us have been playing the things for at least 23 years or so – that we're starting to grow rather numb to the gigantic hype machine that the videogame industry uses with such abandon.

It's not cynicism, which is usually fatal in any business, let alone journalism. We're still excited by all the games that look like they might be truly brilliant, but there's no time in our lives for hype along the lines of game X versus game Y, from professional marketing folk or otherwise. There shouldn't be in yours either.

After all, why can't we have the best of both worlds? Why can't we enjoy both *Saints Row* AND *GTA*? Or *Battlefield* AND *Call of Duty*? Or *Sneak King* AND *Metal Gear Solid: Rising*? Even now we hear arguments about whether Rockstar's Liberty City is 'better' than Volition's Stillwater. Newsflash: 'better' is subjective. They're both really enjoyable... *in our opinion*.

How hard was that?

Not that hard, surely. Sadly, due to many factors (tribalism as ownership, the high cost of buying into these experiences) more often than not most people will find themselves making baseless comparisons between games.

Comparing whether one has shifted more units than the other is valid enough: after all, there's empirical evidence of a 'victory' of some description there, no matter how slight.

Just because Shooter X outsold Shooter Y, however, doesn't mean it's a better game, and anyone buying into that sort of thinking better be ready to admit that *Nintendogs* is a better game than most of the games they hold dear.

Open your minds. Open your hearts. But think before opening your mouths to compare things that don't necessarily correspond. Because that is mental.



SAINTS ROW: THE THIRD

This looks brilliant. If you disagree, we will fight you. Wait...



twitterwatch



@fourzerotwo
It's true, I read every one.
@PlayMag_UK says: Infinity Ward's Rob Bowling proves that he reads every tweet he receives by... well, replying to one asking that question. Now you know where to go with *MW3* questions! Or complaints. Even though it's not out yet.

GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

Can't we just enjoy the avalanche of quality games coming our way, or the ones that have already passed?

CRYSIS ON PSN WHAT'S NEXT?

Super hi-tech (at least in 1996 or whenever it was released) PC shooter *Crysis* has been confirmed as on the way to PSN. What other PC projects would be ripe for a PSN re-release?

Stalker: Call Of Pripyat

An RPG/FPS set in the ruins of a second Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

WHY WE WANT IT: One of the most interesting FPSs in ages, *Stalker* melds interesting exploration, an intriguing economy system and chilling combat with Chernobyl's mutants and other 'Stalkers' to great effect.

The Witcher 2: Assassins Of Kings

Adult-orientated fantasy RPG that also happens to be one of the best examples of the genre.

WHY WE WANT IT: Already on its way to 360, *Witcher 2* is a fabulously deep RPG where every choice you make actually matters. Throw in a heady mix of politics, combat and sex and you've got a winner.

Civilization V

The latest in a long line of superior god games.

WHY WE WANT IT: Because everyone wants to shape the world in their image, right? The empire-building strategy series has already been on PS3 in the form of *Civilization Revolution*, but that was a stripped down version. We want full fat please.

Warhammer: Dawn Of War II

An RTS that puts the *Warhammer* franchise to good use.

WHY WE WANT IT: Warhammer 40k is all about giant battles on an epic scale. This game gives you that. It's that simple.

StarCraft II

The sequel to one of the most popular and addictive RTSs on the planet.

WHY WE WANT IT: Because the PC crowd will go mental, that's why. Oh and it's a supremely well-balanced slice of strategy gaming that Korea treats as its national sport.

INSTALL

5 PLAYSTATION SERIES THAT SHOULD BE REVIVED

Good games get sequels: that's the rule the videogame industry lives by. Sometimes, however, a poor instalment of a brilliant series scuppers the whole shebang, or a game is so good that no one buys it. Here are five series that we want back, and now. Right now!

1 DESTRUCTION DERBY

A true PS classic, this and its sequel were testaments to the power of the console. There's not a lot more satisfying than barrel-rolling a stock car into a racetrack full of rivals, creating the sort of debris-filled explosion that makes NASCAR so popular, so why haven't we got a current-gen sequel?



3 CLOCK TOWER

Yes, it's a point-and-click game, no, it's not rubbish. This PSone horror adventure sees players attempting to unravel the conspiracy of a supernatural serial killer who wields a huge pair of scissors, and despite the ropey graphics is still extremely playable now. Sequel please.



2 THE LEGACY OF KAIN SERIES

Slain nobleman turned apocalyptic vampire overlord, Kain is a supremely interesting character, and yet there's been no sign of him since last generation's *Legacy Of Kain: Defiance*. We like *Soul Reaver*, but something along the lines of the RPG-influenced *LOK: Blood Omen* would be great.



4 ADIDAS POWER SOCCER

If you've never played this, then sadly you've missed out on one of the best games of all time. Dispensing with piffling annoyances such as 'reality' or 'rules', this is the game where you can score a screaming header from the halfway line, kung-fu kick other players and watch a *lot* of advertising for loads of adidas merch. Brilliant.



5 KINGDOM HEARTS

Technically this has been revived, but only on PSP and as you know that doesn't count for anything/much/everything (delete as appropriate). We want Mickey, Squall and co back on a full-sized console. Give us *Kingdom Hearts 3*, Square, and we'll even forget all about *Final Fantasy XIII*.

TEAM PICKS

The games the **Play** team want to see making a comeback



STEVE

LONE SOLDIER

Not really, of course, it was absolute piss. But it was the first PS game I ever bought and nostalgia is bloody addictive.



ANDY

SUIKODEN

One of the few console games I can remember playing before my treacherous turn to the dark side of PC gaming. It was a pretty good RPG as I recall.



DAN

DESERT STRIKE

What do you mean that didn't come out on PlayStation? Oh that was *Nuclear Strike*. They're all the same though, right?



RYAN

TIMESPLITTERS

It doesn't even have to be *TimeSplitters*, thinking about it. I just really want to play as a character called Marco The Snitch again.

The anatomy of... **BARRY BURTON**

The greatest character in the Resident Evil – and quite possibly *any* – universe, Barry Burton is the platinum standard by which other supporting characters must be judged. He is, after all, 'Barry-style'. If you don't know what that means, then you're already dead



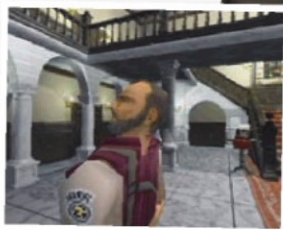
I HAVE THIS!

The first time we ever laid eyes on Barry Burton in a *Resident Evil* game, he was just a fat ginger bloke who looked like a second-rate Brian Blessed. The next, he was popping some caps in zombie asses (although why it took three Magnum shots to kill one zombie escapes us) like the coolest mofo you've ever seen. Why? Because he's Barry Burton, and he has a Colt Python, the best gun in the game.

Think about it. Most of *Resident Evil* is spent creeping around, riddled with 'the fear' hoping you don't run out of bullets. Then, you find your own Colt Python, and suddenly everything changes: you're Superman, or better yet Hudson from *Aliens*, just before he gets killed. Those feelings of invincibility you get when you obtain the Python? Barry Burton feels like that ALL THE TIME.

THE DARK SIDE

It's not all sunshine and happiness with the B-man, however. B-Baz (as friends call him) has a dark side, a guilty treacherous secret: in one of Jill's endings in the original *Resident Evil*, Barry is revealed to have sold out everyone's favourite heroine. Okay, so he does it because Wesker has his family and is threatening to kill them, and he redeems himself later, but whatever. We can forgive, Burdogg, but we can't forget.



FACE/OFF

Like a lot of people, Barry Burton gets better with age. Here, we grade Burton's many looks using the following formula of:

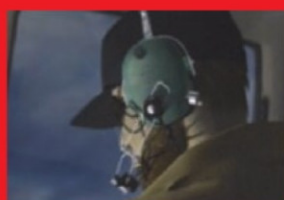
Magnum bullets fired (x by badassery) ÷ by beard polygon construction, with 1 being the worst.

We like to call it the Barry Burton Beard Index.



RESIDENT EVIL (1996)

Back in ye olde days, when characters were made up of 14 triangles and a piece of sticky back plastic, Barry used to look like this. Which, it must be said, is actually better than he does when he's played by an actual person. We give this look 1 beards/polygons.



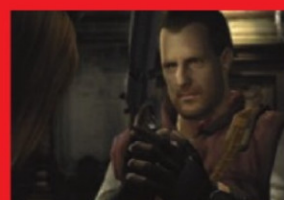
RESIDENT EVIL 3

He only turns up for about three seconds, and in a cut-scene to boot, but that's enough for Barry Burton to fly in, rescue Jill and Carlos, flash that excellent beard (and *only* that beard) and then fly off into the sunset. An exploding, mushroom cloud sunset. What a champion. We give this look 5 beards/polygons.



RESIDENT EVIL GAIDEN

Well, this is an embarrassment. We don't know why an internationally respected superstar such as Burton would agree to appear in this tripe, and we don't want to. All we know is that he's now a cartoon, and cartoons, especially ones on the Game Boy, just can't do the gilet justice. Disgraceful. Negative 900,000 beards.



RESIDENT EVIL REMAKE

Looking good, but sadly, as this game appeared on a bloody Nintendo console, we've decided to disavow this experience, much like a beloved spy who disappears behind enemy lines, never to be seen again.



RESIDENT EVIL 5: THE MERCENARIES

This is more like it: not looking a day over a grief-stricken 55, the B-1000 is back to his ass-kicking best, headbutting zombies, reading them their rights before shooting them in the head, and generally letting everyone know that the king is back. Never forget. 1,000,000 beards.

GRAND STATEMENTS

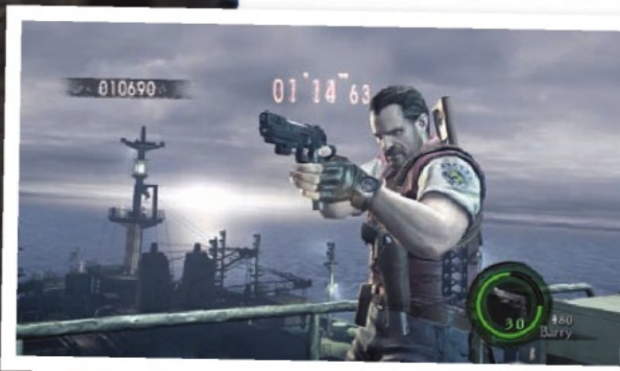
As well as having the second-best beard ever (second only to Orson Welles), Barry Burton also holds the not-inconsiderable distinction of being the most quotable man in history. Smarter than Einstein, wittier than Twain, funnier than Maddox, he's hilarious *and* serious, at the same time. After all any man that exclaims 'WooOaAHHHHH: This hall is DaAaNGEROUS!' while standing in one of the only safe places in the game is obviously mocking videogames as a whole. And then there's the all-time classics: 'master of unlocking', 'Jill sandwich', 'I HAVE THIS!', 'Chris is our old partner, y'know', 'I hope this isn't Chris's blood'. Barry Burton: warrior, scholar, poet.



GILET'S IN THE MIST

Let's get one thing straight: you will never have as good a beard as Barry Burton. No matter how long you wait, how hard you try, how much Regaine you put on your face, it won't matter: Burton's beard is untouchable, even by the man himself. He doesn't style it, because that would waste valuable time when he could be killing something, or quipping about something,

or, preferably, a combination of both. As if that wasn't enough to make grown men cry, Burton also rocks maroon body armour. Maroon, with no sense of irony. If there's one thing that you can deduce from any man that can pull off a maroon body warmer with a ginger beard, it's that he will definitely eff you up.



INSTALL

{The Vault}

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

The toys, trinkets and tailoring that has our fires burning this month



Dr Doom

£9.99 at ForbiddenPlanet.com

True story: In *Marvel Vs Capcom 3*, Play loves Dr Doom because for one super, he shouts "HUMAN SPERM" and for the second, he shouts "BULLS ON PARADE". Don't believe us? Try it. So accepted have those terms become, that's how we now describe those moves. Also look out for - Arthur's "EXPLODING CHRISTMAS" and Hulk's "MATTHEW".



Aperture Pint Glass

\$12.99 @ ThinkGeek.com

Right now we have no way of creating portals that transport us from one place to another instantly. So instead we have to rely on booze, which tends to be able to fake this effect quite convincingly. Just ask ex-Play-er Chris McMahon, who often seems to teleport from place to place when drunk (read: into a skip/bush/ditch).



Nier Soundtrack

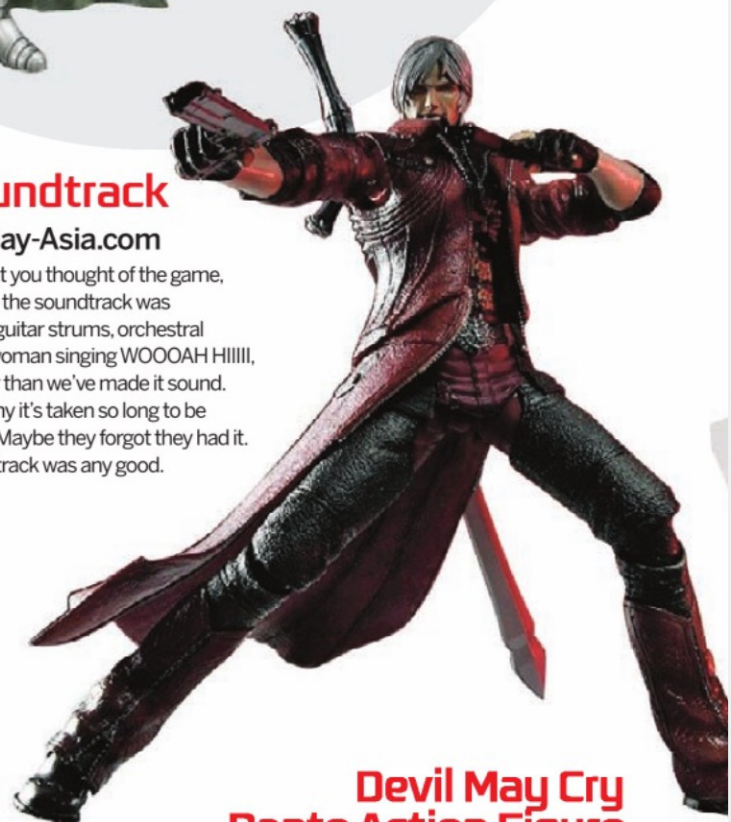
£22.75 at Play-Asia.com

Regardless of what you thought of the game, and most hated it, the soundtrack was immense. Gentle guitar strums, orchestral swirls and some woman singing WOOOAH HIIIIII, it's infinitely better than we've made it sound. Doesn't explain why it's taken so long to be released, though. Maybe they forgot they had it. Or that the soundtrack was any good.

Deluxe Sword Of Omens

£21.99 @ BigBadToyStore.com

ThunderCats has been rebooted for 2011 and... it's not actually that bad. Watch it and see for yourselves. So while we're on this particularly surprising high, we thought it right to recommend the toy we all had as a kid - also rebooted for 2011. Because the Sword Of Omens flanking well rules.



Devil May Cry Dante Action Figure

£11.99 @ StarStore.com

This has existed for ages now, but it's approaching the point where the new *DmC* along with the new design of Dante hits the streets. We know you all hate the new one, or something, so why not buy a version of the old one and wave him about in front of the screen to obscure your view of *Ninja Theory's* take on the devil-busting goon.



Zombie Attack Hoodie

\$59.99 @ ThinkGeek.com

Have you ever wanted to look like the clothing you're wearing has been torn up, and that your skin below it has been scratched and bitten to the point where you may or may not be about to turn into one of the walking dead? Well you're clearly a bit weird then.



Treasure Seekers Metal Detector Sandals

£38.99 @ FlashWear.com

If you have ever wanted to go treasure hunting, scouring the beaches and farmlands for riches lost to the ages - but you didn't want people to know what you were doing - then these might be for you. If you need a new pair of sandals, these are abso-definitely for you.



Play Arts Kai Action Figures: Jeanne

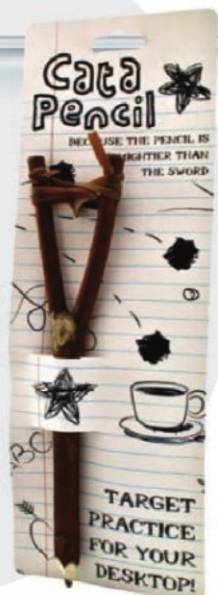
£19.99 at ForbiddenPlanet.com

Yes, we know, '*Bayonetta* is a mystery' and all that nudity except for the bits her hair cover and she spins around breakdancing on the floor and then she winks at you. Wait. This was supposed to be an argument why Jeanne is better and it's gone completely wrong. Hmmm. Buy this statue in the meantime. We'll justify her being the better character in the next issue.

Catapencil

£7.99 @ IWOOT.com

There's a strong chance that many of you reading this might still be at school. There's an absolute 100 per cent chance that all of you reading this will enjoy a little bit of dicking around every now and then. Either way, you're going to love this 'catapencil'. We're sure you can work out what it does, but just remember that Play accepts no responsibility for any ocular damage as a result of 'horseplay'.



CONDITIONS: Enter discount code when placing order. MySoti.com discount code only valid on featured items between 29 September and 27 October 2011. Visit MySoti.com for even more great T-Shirts.

Melting Shelf Clock

£5.00 @ Play.com

Do you find the whole 'telling time' thing that bit too easy? Want something a bit more challenging, or something that will involve you double-checking just to make sure the hand is pointing at six? Well this is the perfect clock for you. As well as Salvador Dali.



Batman Figure

\$224.99 @ BigBadToyStore.com

Michael Keaton is the best Batman. Yes, he bloody is. While the rest of them are pretty-boy posers more concerned with their hair than their acting, Keaton is too busy perfecting the art of looking like you've got serious mental illness. Which, when you're playing a man that spends his nights dressing up as a bat, is probably wise. Celebrate that fact with this awesome, 1/6th scale collectors' figure.



LOW FIVE

Controllers we will NEVER USE

Resident Evil 4 Chainsaw Controller £49.99

We'd say 'yeah, but it looks cool' if it weren't for the fact that it *doesn't even look cool*. It just looks stupid, and clearly plays stupider. Feel free to waste £50, if you want.



The Original PlayStation Pad & Cheap

Sorry, original PlayStation pad. You were usurped long ago and – while it's taken us a while to be able to admit it – we will never go back to you. Actually, we're not sorry.



PlayStation Move Sharp Shooter Attachment £39.99

It's bad enough playing FPSs with Move without the addition of some hulking piece of crap peripheral getting in the way. If you don't mind looking like a bit of a plonker then feel free to buy this.



Any Pad That Looks Like This About £5

There seem to be a lot less unofficial pads around these days, but we still remember the days of wireless aberrations like this. God, they were awful. Never again.



Ctrl+S PS3 Pad \$69.99

When it comes to asking 'what in the hell is this', we cannot stress enough the exasperation in our voices with this controller. It might well be wonderful and ergonomic and all that guff, but we will *never* use one.

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I LIKE THE
**BUTTERY
BISCUIT
BASS**



Buttery Bass Simple £17.57 @ MySoti.com

It's always fun to jump on a bandwagon, especially for something that's already lost popularity by the time we're writing about it and will be all but forgotten by the time this issue actually comes out, *but there you go*. Basically this shirt will live forever even if you don't know what it's on about (Google it), mainly because of the face.



Portal Gun Service and Repair Manual Tee £19.92 @ MySoti.com

Yeah, we're as fed up as the next guy with the constant *Portal* referencing that goes seemingly *everywhere*, but we're going to let this one slide as we actually kind of like it. A tribute to the old Haynes practical manuals, this is nicely done. Congratulations, MySoti.com: you've done it again.



Air Swimmers Shark - RC Blimp

£39.90 @ FlashWear.com

You know how sharks are terrifying, but rendered a slightly null and void by the fact they can only really kill the crap out of you on or around the ocean? Well, this is a vision of a future we never want to see come real. Flying sharks. Everywhere. Taking over the world.



Gears Of War 3 Series 1 Marcus 7" Action Figure

£8.99 @ Play.com

What better way to 'celebrate' the release of the game oh-so-loved by those 360 owners by buying an action figure related to *Gears Of War 3*? Well, we'd suggest making it better by buying one then *setting fire to it*. WARNING: adult supervision required for burning Marcus Fenix.



BioShock Full Size Replica Splicer Welder Mask

£32.99 @ ForbiddenPlanet.co.uk

It's coming up to Halloween, so you need some kind of costume that can hide your disgustingly ugly face. So why not buy something that can also come in useful afterwards, for when you need to do that welding you've been putting off for so long? **DISCLAIMER:** mask is not actually good for welding with.

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Deus Ex: Stop being so bossy

We're ranting about it again. Deal with it.

We're barely into the post-*Deus Ex: Human Revolution* comedown period and already things are popping up that make us look to the future – and make us question certain decisions in Eidos Montreal's undoubtedly brilliant game.

Why yes, I am talking about boss fights. As I pointed out in our review of the game:

"They don't fit in the game, they don't fit in the logic that *Human Revolution* spends so long building up and they're simply not fun. In the end, all of our victories – bar one – felt like blind luck, leaving them hollow and unsatisfying. When it's about 8.2 billion times more fun to take down one weak grunt than it is one of the game's main antagonists, you know something's just not right."

So why do they exist? Why are boss battles a feature of such a well-realised, fleshed-out and deep game? Well it's not like boss fights don't belong in *Deus Ex*. In fact, they do. They just need an approach that isn't an arena-based fight to the death. They need Anna Navarre's killswitch from the first game. They need to be avoidable. They need to have other ways to get through them.

This isn't a slight on *Human Revolution* – it's still brilliant and still definitely worth your dollar. But the boss fights... man... just search Twitter to see the reaction of people who were playing it over this past extended weekend. See how many mention the boss fights. See how many mention them in a negative light. Hopefully any future *Deus Ex* sequels eliminate these YOU HAVE TO FIGHT elements. For the sake of all of our sanity.



Game stories are bad

Dear devs: stop explaining everything

Once upon a time, when games were simple things that used one button and had no checkpoints, the stories in them would shout about something going wrong. The President has been kidnapped! Aliens are invading! And the, er... President is still kidnapped! And that would be it. The ending screen would say 'Congratulations! Thing that went wrong we mentioned at start of game has now been fixed. Well done you!' If you were really lucky, you'd get your character lifting his arms in the air or maybe, just maybe, a few seconds of animation.

Nowadays, it's not enough for games like, say, *Assassin's Creed* to be about being an assassin. No, you have to play as a bartender who finds out about the templars and secret history of the world thanks to a secret organisation who kidnapped him and then accessed his memories. To top it all off, it has an ending no one understands.

Why couldn't *Driver: San Francisco* just be about driving and even with its

Shift mechanic, did we really need the story to justify its existence? And can anyone explain what happens in any of the *Metal Gear Solid* games? The showdown with Wesker at the end of *Resident Evil 5* goes from drama to farce over a long, painful hour as the storyline hits higher and higher levels of comedy and ridiculousness. And this is in a game about zombies.

Then there's plot hole spotting in *Modern Warfare 2*, which is like a mini-game in itself. Why did Russia invade the US from the East coast? How did Russia not recognise known terrorist Makarov from airport security before blaming the US? Why did the undercover agent not kill Makarov at the airport? Why was the US government writing 'blank checks' for Shepherd instead of demanding to know how a US agent was implicated in the murder of Russian civilians? How did Price launch the nukes from the sub without any launch code, let alone get it to detonate in space?

Sometimes, games try too hard. Relax. Just be games. Be fun. Don't try to dazzle us with incredible twists and turns. We never needed intricate, in-depth storylines to enjoy *Sonic* and *Mario*, just as we don't need everything explained to us now. Just chill. Yeah?



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Things you may have missed on our Facebook page



PLAY'S FAVOURITE READERS

Ryan met these lovely ladies at Gamescom and tried to convince them to join the **Play** team. They declined so we're stuck staring at each other's ugly mugs still. Oh well.



IAN-ISM

We've never even contemplated what Ian-ism tasted like before, having never known it to exist, let alone being forced to taste it. Now, thanks to *PES 2012*, we have. Mmm. Salty.

PLAY DISCUSSION:

Natalie Rowe: I was glad to see (in issue 208) that *Legacy Of Kain* is still being thought about, but as for your idea of a Move-controlled reboot... NO, NO and NO!!!! It's a hardcore game! Not some namby-pamby kids game or naff party game. There isn't anything wrong with the way it was controlled with a proper controller! Don't try to fix what ain't broke!!! (and besides that my room is only 2m x 3.2m and I ant got the room to use Move, I've been waiting for a new game for eight years, don't give Square Enix ideas to make a new one I can't play!!!!!!!!!!) Right rant over, I still LOVE your mag and will be purchasing the latest issue today.

Play: God damn. Natalie, you've got FIRE!

Natalie Rowe: I'm a teeny bit passionate about *LOK*.

Jack King: "Nobody likes Man City" I do!

Neil Vincent: Birmingham ftw!

Jack King: Championship football :)

James Ward: Portsmouth!

Neil Vincent: I would rather have Man City or Chelsea win the league than Man U though ;)

Conor Garratt: Swindon! I think I win here

Jack King: Ryan supports Barnet

Joe Riddell: TOON

Jack Zissell: In response to one of the hot topics in the recent mag I think that *Uncharted 3* doesn't need to be half as good as *Uncharted 2* to not be disappointing and we know that's not gonna happen. One thing they should do is scrap the multiplayer and its awful matchmaking and use their remaining time to make a new *Jak* game.

James Ward: I personally loved the multiplayer and the beta was very unique, and although in early stages, seemed to be boding well. I hope *UC3* is amazing and better than *UC2*, but I cant help feeling that the hype may muffle the overall excitement towards its release.

Jack Zissell: I'm just looking forward to the same amazing stories that Naughty Dog can make, but you've also got to admit that the matchmaking in *UC2* and the beta has been awful and no *COD*-style gimmicks can save that.

James Ward: Compared to *COD* it is much slower but after a few updates, *Uncharted 2* ran quickly and the matches never lost connection, but yeah, it was quite annoying.

Daley Roberts: Thanks **Play** for publishing my letter but I don't live in Ireland. I live in South Wales.

Play: Are you sure?

Daley Roberts: Haha, yes, I am definitely sure.

You Tube

www.youtube.com/PlayMagUK

Things you may have missed on our YouTube page



PLAY SUCKS AT JOE DANGER: THE MOVIE



ONO X HARADA (STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN)



FINAL FANTASY XIII PAX TRAILER



SF X TEKKEN - CHARACTER TEASER 1



SF X TEKKEN - CHARACTER TEASER 2



ADAM JENSEN IS A DICK

twitter

www.twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

What have you been saying to us on Twitter?

@PLAYMAG_UK Once upon a time, we asked for reader reviews and said we'd RT the best ones. As a wise man once said, WHAT HAPPEN? Let's see those reviews!

@BEARSKOPFF *Driver: San Francisco* review. It's bloody good! The end. By Bearskopff.

@PROTAG22 *Deus Ex* Review - YO, WOT DIS GAME SPOS 2 B ABOUT DAWG? SHITS CRAZY, I OUGHTA STRAIGHT UP ICE DA MOFO WHO MADE DIS. 0/9.

@LIAMALAND *Bodycount*: The game that failed to deliver... I didn't buy it... honest :P

@GAMINGRUMOURS *Deus Ex: HR* - Play as a shooty, stealthy, haxxOr looking for the truth. Great! Also great for those who like black and gold. 9/10

@BEARSKOPFF *THOR* Review. THORoughly THORsome? THORt not. THOR/10.

@FRANKIEADZ *Deus Ex: HR* review

@PLAYMAG_UK Play is nearing the end of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*. How are you spending Saturday afternoon?

@CHRIS1_9_80 watching the GF play *Zumba* ho hum

@PROTAG22 Resisting the urge to send **Play** mag a bunch of spoilers for *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.

@PLAYMAG_UK Do you listen to custom soundtracks when playing PS3?

@ZJMAN You can do that?

@PLAYMAG_UK Depends on game. *SFIV*, *Bayonetta*, *PES*...

@_AHUNT Tried it few times but the gimmick wore off. Most games have stunning audio.

@PLAYMAG_UK Do you want your tweet to feature in the next issue of **Play**? You better impress us with a tweet in the next hour or so. GO.

@JPFEWSTER If you're reading this then my tweet is in **Play** mag that you are holding, and enjoying, and realising that it's money well spent!

@ALKOGNIUZZZ No thanx. Just waiting for the maildude to drop the new issue on my doormat.

@DANNYMANNING87 I am 11% sure *Deus Ex: Human Revolution* is worth four playthroughs exactly. Fact. And facts are never wrong. Fact.

@STEEPO_MAN This tweet is impressive... Why? Because I say so...

@PROTAG22 You know you've played too much *Mortal Kombat* when your wife mentions 'furniture' and you rip her spine out through her face.

RE:PLAY

At the time of writing, we're in the middle of a drought. It's made us – and you – slightly insane. Hopefully by the time you're reading this things will be better



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The fingers you have used, are too fat



Dearest **Play** team,

Spring Commencement of letter:

Greatly love your magazig-machine, 'tis often simply wondrous to beholden.

Summer Middlement continuation: the heart/breast of the darkness the matter. What is the point of this letter?

ONE DAY WILL FILMS BE FOR FAT-FINGERED PEOPLE?

L.A. Noire, *Heavy Rain*, both great examples of 'filmic' game experiences. But most big games have been very cinematic, from *Tomb Raider* onwards, but now graphically they are complying with the laypersons' vision of cinema. I can foresee a time when cinema (Greek = movement) becomes a very personal experience, utilising knobs and buttons to create your individual cinema.

Autumnal chin stroke: where I provide summation of letter.

Ergo, fat-fingered people will just watch, yet you and I will be able to participate in cinema.

Wintry sagacious nod: finish with a humorous flurry.

May lust trample your dainty chocolate legs and forever cast your senses into perpetual hormonal serpitude.

Yours mostly sincerely,

Dan Hall

Dan – Ian here – unfortunately we can't print your other, arguably better letter as I thought it made allusions to something NAUGHTY that we can't talk about in a family magazine. Anyway, this one's a fine substitute, and you are now officially my favourite letter-writer. OBLIGATORY PLATITUDE: well done.

Faction contraction

I was saddened to read that the *Red Faction* series will no longer be continued. I really enjoyed the first and *Guerrilla*.

Armageddon disappointing, but playable.

This, however, did get me thinking and *Shadows Of The Damned* popped into my head. This game by no means is a classic but what it is, is a fun romp that kept me entertained until the credits. I then read that it only sold like 27,000-ish copies. This means that there is little chance of a sequel.

It's such a shame as it was a nice change to what is usually released (FPSs and football games – which I enjoy, too). It's worrying for the future, too, as new franchise numbers will become less and less. EA took chances with *Mirror's Edge* and *Dead Space* and it kind of paid off but smaller developers will be



The stuff we want to hear about!



1

How influenced are you by the opinions of others?

2

What are your parents' attitudes towards your gaming habits?

3

Which videogame characters do you want to see come back?

apprehensive in their originality. Hopefully the future is not too bleak...

Regards

Paul Jones, Byfleet, Surrey

We actually held a week of mourning for the death of *Red Faction*... well, Ian did. Bless his stupid otter face. *Armageddon* was pretty pump, but the fact Volition had created *Guerrilla* and the original showed that there was something going for the series. But it's all down to sales. *SOTD* did quite well, reviews-wise, and it had the pedigree behind it to get core gamers into a bit of a tizzy. But yeah, it sold nothing. And that's sad. And it's a damning indictment of gaming. And it means all we're ever going to have in the future is *COD* and other such money-spinners spoon-fed to us. Forever. Sorry, we're going to quit games from now on.

It's all relative, Oddly

First of all, great mag!

Reading the 'You Never Played...' section of **Play 208** (it being *Oddworld*) brought back one of the most favourite gaming memories I've ever had. Around 17 years ago – I would have been around six or seven years old – I always loved doing stuff with my dad as any young boy does. Now he doesn't understand games or gamers but for some reason after me bothering him for god knows how long he decided to play *Oddworld* with me.

I was overjoyed, we played two-player and both weren't very good at it, but had our strengths. I was better at the running fast



Not terrible, but not worth killing the series over.



Write in and win! Every letter we print receives a free game. This month – it's NHL 12 courtesy of EA, which is available now for the PS3 (£49.99). Check out our review on page 93 to find out what we thought of it.

through the temples part and my dad was better at the secret saving Mudokons bits.

We played from ten in the morning until... until the next morning! Obviously being six/seven years old that was a major deal for me, I had stayed up almost 24 hours sat on my cabin bed with my dad having a good time playing a game, something he would never do and something I was not allowed to do! We saved every Mudokon and would not continue until they had all been saved... which is why it took so long I would imagine.

We even took a picture of the final save board (the boards that tell you the stats during the game) and sent it into some PlayStation magazine (I can't remember which one).

Unfortunately, that's the ONLY game my dad has ever bothered to play. We never got round to playing the second one all the way through together, though he was interested in how I was doing with it. BUT we still recall that moment when I'm talking games to someone and he's there and he always has a smile on his face.

Now we work together and do the odd hobby together which I DO love, but it's *Oddworld* together that will always be one of the favourite memories of doing something with my dad.



I still have both PSone *Oddworlds* in original disc version in mint condition, something I just won't throw away and it could be because of that memory.

Thanks for bringing it to the top of my mind...

Unfortunately it means your 'You Never Played' section was wrong.

Col

Col, you're making us want to cry – that's just bloody heartwarming. Quick poll of the team to see whose dads played games with them and not: Ian – no. Steve – anything golf related. Ryan – no. Andy – no. Dan – no, but he will probably play FIFA with his newborn daughter. When she's older. Not right now. Though she would be easy to beat right now, and Dan needs all the help he can get on that game. Anyway, where were we? Oh yes – lovely story, and a great advert for the power of gaming to pervade our every waking hour. Or something.

Independence day

Dear Play,

First things first: great magazine, easily the best PS3 magazine on the shelves.

Right, now that's done I would like to tell you about something that has

been on my mind for a while about my taste in games. The first time I thought about this was during *COD: Black Ops*. When I first got my hands on it I thought it was good, not great but good. After about a week I got really bored thinking how very similar it was to all the others (basically) and ended up trading it in while everybody else was ranting and raving about how amazing it was.

Then came Christmas. I had a few games to catch up on so I got *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, *R.U.S.E.* and *Uncharted 2*. While I thought *Batman* was amazing, I also thought the same about *R.U.S.E.*, yet none of my friends had heard of it. As for *Uncharted 2*... amazing graphics, amazing gameplay, amazing multiplayer, which just leaves Mr Drake. While I thought he was a good character, I just couldn't see him as both a treasure hunter and a one-man army.

Then, while out one fine day, I noticed *Enslaved: Odyssey To The West*. Never heard anyone talk about it nor seen anyone on my PSN friends list play it. Gave it a go, and... WOW!

Then, as the months passed there was not much longer until *L.A. Noire*. Saw trailers, read about it and thought to myself: 'am I the only one who thinks this game looks like the most boring game ever? I mean you solve murders, how boring! I'm staying well clear!' I never liked *Portal 2* either. So I'd urge all gamers just because your friends like a game, doesn't mean you have to play it. The best games you could be playing aren't always the biggest or most expensive. Okay, rant and rave over!

Regards
Lee Heather

We were going to be all supportive and happy of the fact you're championing individuality and freedom of thought, Lee, but then you went and dropped the IDLP bomb. Saying anything along the lines of "I don't like *Portal 2*" is tantamount to heresy around these parts. You're polite and make a decent point, though, so we're going to forego the usual 'banned from Play' thing we often do. But consider yourself warned – personal opinions are allowed, encouraged and wonderful things. But don't disagree with us about *Portal 2*. It makes us sad.



• We've always said you should buy this. Lee agrees.

PLAY

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68

THINGS YOU DIDN'T
KNOW ABOUT

METAL GEAR SOLID



Think you know everything about **METAL GEAR SOLID**? Think again. Play has checked under all the cardboard boxes, opened all the lockers and eaten all the snakes (maybe) to bring you the 68 most interesting Metal Gear facts out there. Semper Fi!



JEREMY BLAUSTEIN

TRANSLATOR, METAL GEAR SOLID

► ARGUMENTS OVER DECOY OCTOPUS

"We had a disagreement early on about the names of the villains that I recall. It was my opinion that a name like 'Decoy Octopus' wouldn't work in English as it did in Japanese because, to the Japanese, foreign words have an exotic ring to them, but to the English-speaking audience, it would just sound silly. He disagreed and insisted they not be changed and I think, in the end, he was right."

► SCRIPT HAD 'CORNY' DIALOGUE

"Certain lines were a little 'corny', let's just say, and I didn't feel that they would work well. A line like 'Let's live!' or 'Does love really bloom on a battlefield?' were a couple of examples. I think I got rid of the first one, but one of the handlers caught me trying to get rid of the second one. It's hard to explain to a person that doesn't speak the language why it doesn't 'work.'"

► KONAMI 'POISONED' KOJIMA'S OPINION

"My feeling is that it is because, in the making of *Metal Gear Solid: Integral*, Kojima's staff lined up the Japanese and English line for line (not something I expected would ever happen) and I think they were told to look for 'differences'. When they found differences, they reported them and I believe this gave the impression, wrongly, that I had willy-nilly changed Kojima's words. But this is something that you may not understand if you are not bilingual. If you translate something overly directly, it often sounds terrible and so I was getting the right 'feel' as opposed to always getting the exact words. I think Mr Kojima's staff poisoned his opinion of my work. But after *MGS 2* came out, I felt vindicated when I read the blandness of the translation effort. It clearly wasn't done with the kind of care I did."

► SNAKE'S VOICE WAS UNKNOWN

"Initially, David Hayter really didn't know what kind of voice he wanted to use for Snake – he felt his voice wasn't tough enough and it's normally kind of high. But, after trying a lot of things, he and I agreed that the 'Clint Eastwood imitation' approach was a good way to go. But, as I recall, it hurt his throat and so he had to be careful with it."

► SNAKE AND OTACON ARE 'GAY'

"Voice actors are usually really fun people to work with and this was no exception. There were lots of jokes about how 'gay' some of the interchanges between Snake and Otacón were, such as them riding together on the snowmobile and the final scene."



“Most fans have been really cool but then every now and then I get some really creepy messages”



LYNDALL JARVIS

LAUGHING BEAUTY MODEL, METAL GEAR SOLID 4

► BLACK SUITS AND YELLOW STICKERS

"It really wasn't a massive process. I went into the studios, they put me in a full black body suit, stuck tiny little luminous yellow stickers all over my body and then took photos from every angle. They also made me do several face expressions and different body positions."

► SHE GETS CREEPY MESSAGES FROM FANS

"Most fans have been really cool but then every now and then I get some really creepy messages! Some guy once told me how he killed me this morning and he enjoyed it! Super creepy!"

MUSIC

► SNAKE EATER'S MEANING (MGS 3)

If you've wondered what those nonsense lyrics are about, *MGS* composer Norihiko Hibino explains. "It is the subject song of *MGS 3* and the tune which forms the foundation of the story. This song was written when director Kojima just told me that *MGS 3* was about survival, work and life. I used these key words to create the vocals for this song. It is not a simple sweet love song, but seriousness of life and love."

► STARSAILOR AND MGS (MGS 3)

One of Hideo Kojima's colleagues told him to listen to a band called Stella Starr. Mishearing their name as Starsailor, Kojima listened to them instead, liked *Way To Fall* and used it as *MGS 3*'s ending theme.

► THIRD METAL GEAR SOLID ENDING (MGS)

Beat the game twice with either ending, then beat it again a third time and the music in the second half of the credits will be a remix of the *MGS* theme.





JENNIFER HALE

NAOMI HUNTER,
METAL GEAR SOLID 4

▶ VOICE ACTORS FIND SCRIPTS INCOMPREHENSIBLE

"So over my head! Sometimes it gets pretty far out there, but it works because there is always a thread that brings it back around. I love working on his stuff, it's brilliant."

▶ THEY DO THE JOB AND MOVE ON

"The fans are great to me, I'm really grateful they're out there and so involved. Other than emails sent directly to me – I do my best to read all of them – I don't do a lot of reading about the work I do, I prefer to do it and move on to whatever's next."



HEALTH.DOC

HEALTH

▶ CATCHING A COLD (MGS 2)

If you stick about in the driving rain on the Aft Deck in Hard or Extreme mode, Snake will catch a cold.

▶ EVA GETS STOMACH CRAMPS (MGS 3)

When you have to help injured EVA, spin her round in Survival Viewer to make her vomit. Keep doing it and she'll complain about stomach cramp.

▶ LONG GAME ADVISORY (MGS 4)

If you finish a chapter after 4am, the install screen will tell you that you've been playing for a while and that you should get up to do stretches.

▶ NO SMOKING (MGS 4)

Whenever Snake smokes in a cut-scene, there's always a No Smoking sign nearby.

▶ NO SMOKING AGAIN (MG: GHOST BABEL)

Owing to Game Boy Color's younger demographic, Solid Snake has a 'fogger' replacing his cigarettes. He uses the fogger to spot infrared alarm beams.



FINAL CUTS

▶ WEEK LONG BATTLE AGAINST THE END (MGS 3)

"I had the production team read Stephen Hunter's *Point Of Impact* and James Thayer's *White Star*," said Kojima. "We were really thinking of a duel that will take around a week long, but it gradually went away while we were staring at the monitor."



▶ OLD BOY WAS DROPPED (MGS 2)

One of the characters cut from *Metal Gear Solid 2* was Old Boy. He was supposedly the former mentor of Big Boss and commanded his own unit of soldiers called the Fallschirmjäger, which was what Germany's Paratrooper division in World War II was known as. Ideas and elements of Old Boy were used for The End instead.

▶ METAL GEAR WAS ALMOST TEAM GAME (MGS)

"While I was working on *Metal Gear*, I wanted to achieve an infiltration as a team like 'Wild Geese' when the point of view was changed from 'a game to escape' to 'a special-force game to infiltrate,'" explained Kojima. "It is because there is no way to infiltrate alone. However, at that time, one-man infiltration was the only option because of the game character and the restriction on the hardware. It is ordinary for FPS."

▶ THE 30-SECOND SILENCE (MGS 3)

When EVA asks Snake if his mission is to assassinate The Boss, Kojima wanted the following silence to last 30 seconds. In the final version, it lasts 12.

▶ EVA VS OCELOT SHOWDOWN (MGS 3)

Originally, EVA and Ocelot were supposed to have a scuffle shortly after Snake meets Ocelot. The scene was due to have them fighting on a bike with Snake training the gun on both of them, before EVA rears her bike up like a horse. The entire scene was cut from the final game.

▶ EVA DISGUISE THAT NEVER WORKED (MGS 3)

Although she's disguised as Tatyana in the storyline, it's obvious to the player that EVA and Tatyana are the same person. However, Konami did want Tatyana to look different to EVA but as "it is the same model, there's nothing we can do about it."

▶ OCELOT'S ARM: THE REAL STORY (MGS 2)

Ocelot having Liquid Snake's arm grafted onto his body has been a sore point with some series fans since *MGS 2*, but if Kojima had followed his original plan none of this silliness would have transpired. Kojima originally wanted Ocelot to have a mechanical arm transplanted instead.

▶ IT WAS ALMOST SET IN... IRAQ? (MGS 2)

The original setting for *MGS 2* (according to the *Metal Gear Saga Vol 1* DVD) was alleged to have been Iraq and Iran. Snake was to find himself racing to destroy a Metal Gear derivative against the clock, but rising tensions in the Middle East forced Kojima to scrap the plan.

▶ THE MGS GAME THAT NEVER HAPPENED (MGS 3)

Many of you may know of the zombie mini-game in *MGS 3*, named Guy Savage. Save immediately after Snake is interrogated by Volgin (but before he escapes the cell), and he will wake up in the hack-'n'-slash mini-game when the save is loaded.

What isn't as widely known is that Guy Savage was originally meant to be expanded into a full game, according to *MGS 4* co-director Shuyo Murata, but was eventually scrapped.



No, I have never played them. I have them all tucked away somewhere safe



DEBI MAE WEST

MERYL, METAL GEAR SOLID 4

VOICE-ACTING FOR MGS 4 WAS DIFFERENT

"Metal Gear Solid 4 was different, in that Kris Zimmerman, the director, had cast members work together. In most games, you are alone, reading your lines and trying to act out what you think might be happening with another character. In Metal Gear I was able to work alongside David Hayter who plays Snake, and Beng Spies who plays my lover. It's very different looking into someone's eyes as you read lines, than it is to make it up in your head."

VOICE ACTORS FOUND SCRIPT FUNNY

"You don't get much time to read through scripts in our business, so it isn't like I was super prepared or knowledgeable about what to expect. I knew that I was reuniting with Snake and I also knew that I would be getting married. I laughed at some of the scenes, as the Japanese have a great sense of humour."

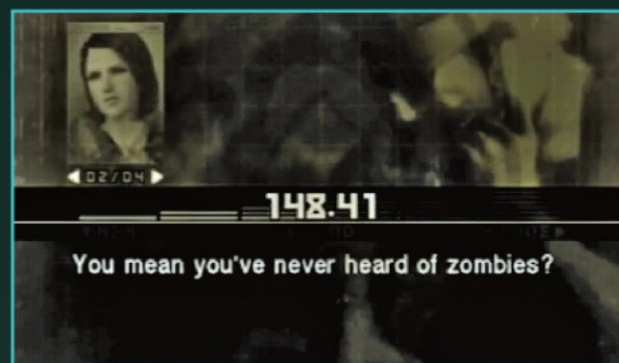
MERYL HAS NEVER PLAYED MGS

"No, I have never played them. I have the games all tucked away somewhere safe."

INSULTS

KOJIMA KNOWS RAIDEN IS HATED (MGS 3)

"Take note of Raikov's underpants. It's the 'Thunderbolt Pants', with a thunder mark on it," says Kojima about the scene with Raiden lookalike Raikov in MGS 3. "And the poster inside the locker is Raiden, too. Also, whether you knock out Raikov or kill him is indication of your love towards Raiden. I'm guessing it'll be a swift death for him in Europe. But, that decision I leave up to the player. That is the essence of MGS."



SNAKE HASN'T HEARD OF ZOMBIES (MGS 3)

Call Sigint with zombie face paint on. They'll have a conversation about it and admit to not knowing what zombie means. Paramedic is shocked Snake doesn't know what zombies are and explains.

KOJIMA THINKS EVA IS HATED TOO (MGS 3)

Hideo Kojima has noted that "the American voice actors disliked EVA's character".

SNAKE HATES SONIC (SUPER SMASH BROS BRAWL)

When playing as Snake fighting against Sonic in the Nintendo brawler, contact Otacon. They'll have a conversation and Snake will say, "something about [Sonic] just rubs me the wrong way."

MGS TOLD YOU THAT YOUR TV SUCKED (MGS)

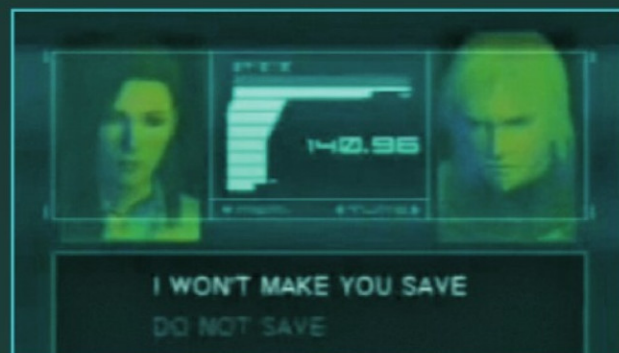
When fighting the Hind D chopper, call Naomi or Campbell. They'll say to use the stereo speakers to follow the sound of the chopper to help locate it. If audio is set to monaural, they'll tell you to get a better TV.

THE JAPANESE SWEAR MORE (MGS 3)

EVA in Metal Gear Solid 3 was the first character to swear, saying "fuck you" to Volgin in the Japanese version. In the English version, however, it was changed to "go to hell."

ROSE HAS A TANTRUM (MGS 2)

If you keep contacting Rose while in the toilet, she'll eventually have a tantrum and the option to SAVE changes to I WON'T MAKE YOU SAVE.



!?

CONTRA! (MGS 3)

Enter the Konami code (↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, ←, →, ←, →, ⊕, ⊙) on the map when fighting The End and it'll show you where he is.

CHANGING PLACES (MGS 4)

The voice actor for The Fury, Richard Doyle, would go on to become the voice actor for Big Boss in Metal Gear Solid 4.

MURDER MYSTERY (MGS: SPECIAL MISSIONS)

Mission 10 in the 'Mystery' subcategory sees Snake investigating a plush office to find an explanation for the dead Genome Soldier in front of him.



After five minutes of irritating red herrings and panicked glances at the clock, the Soldier on floor gets up and stretches: he's fallen asleep on a bottle of ketchup.



DROWNING DEATH (MGS 3)

An incredibly quick way to beat The Sorrow – deliberately drown yourself in the river, then use the Revive pill.

BREAST ENHANCEMENT (MGS 3)

EVA's bio on Konami's official Japanese MGS site showed that she has had breast enhancements.



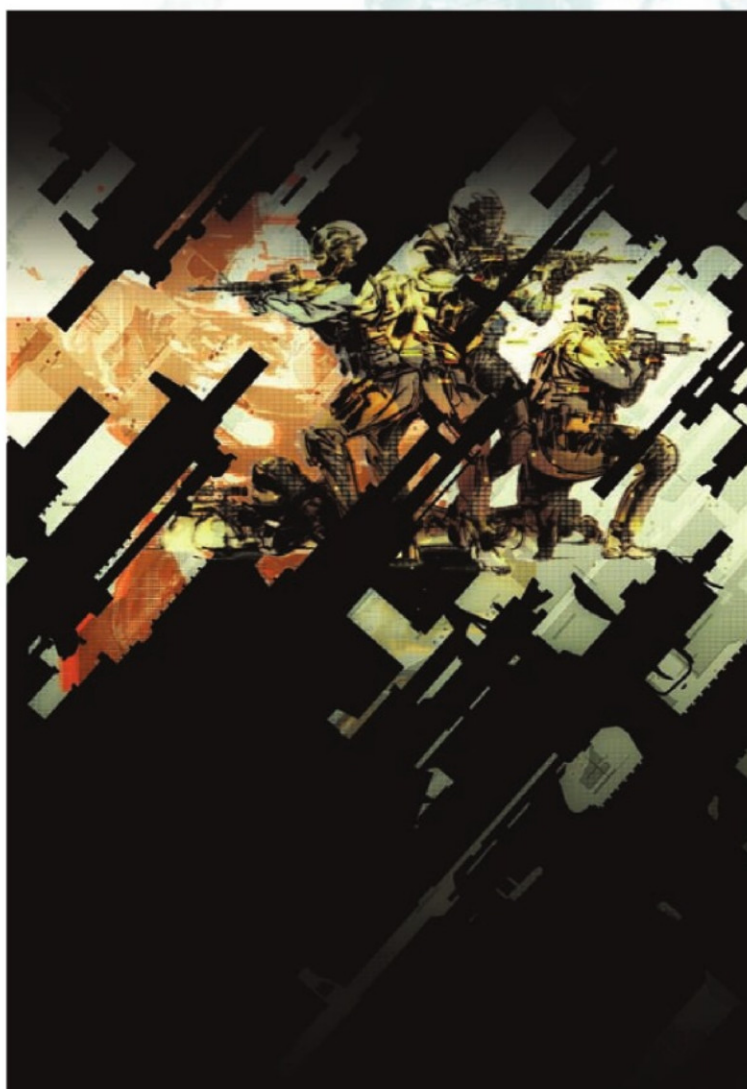
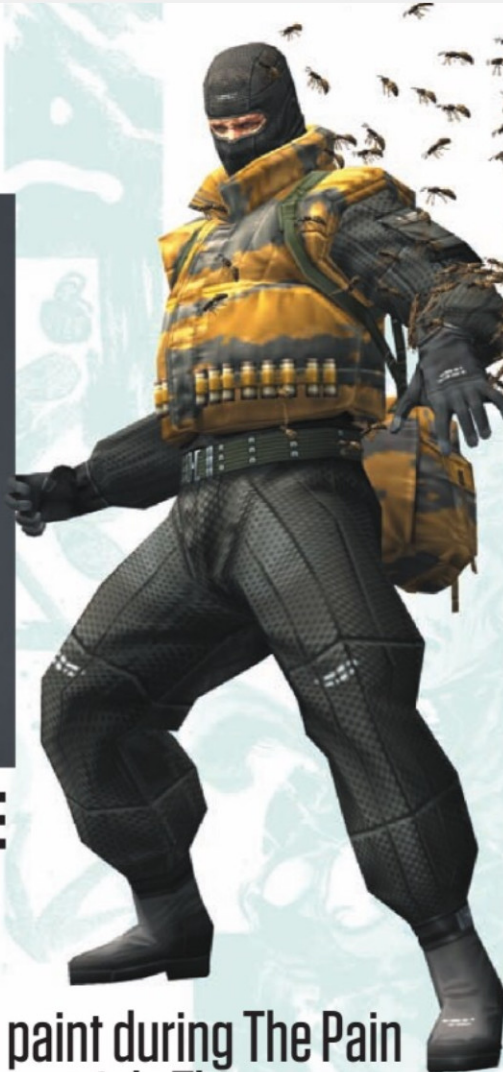
THE FOLLOWING QUOTES ARE ALL FROM KOJIMA HIMSELF. ENJOY THE MADNESS!

“ White camouflage and face paint during The Pain boss fight. This is a bee keeper trick. This was thought up at a honey shop when I was on a leisure trip to Karuizawa. If the bullet bee The Pain shoots out makes contact, it will continue to eat away inside Snake's body. If you don't cure it properly in the Cure Menu, life and stamina will keep decreasing, so beware. ”

“ Originally there were going to be so many bees that the entire screen turned black and there is zero visibility. But that wouldn't look good if you can't see anything that's happening. It appears as if Snake jumped down the crevice on purpose, but really he just fell. Because the scene was originally completely black with bees, and Snake wasn't able to see anything. It's not very clear. ”

“ Tatyana's lipstick pistol 'Kiss of Death' is a real life spy goods of the Sixties. I was told the real thing is displayed in an American spy museum. I was going to visit and look at the real thing, but was not able to in the end. It is very regrettable. ”

“ By killing his parrot, The End will find it more difficult to track Snake's movements. However, this will make him enraged and more aggressive. ”



SEX



► MERYL STRIPPING OFF (MGS)

When you climb through the vents to the DARPA chief, you see Meryl exercising in her room. Crawl back and then back in and she'll change exercise. Keep doing this and eventually she'll end up in her underwear.

► HOW TO BREAK YOUR CROTCH (MGS 4)

You can step up on statue pedestals, and press Δ to assume various poses. With one of the statues, you will grab its crotch. Do this several times, and that part of the statue will eventually break off.

► HIDDEN JAPANESE MODELS (MGS 4)

When Campbell is briefing you via the large screen, shoot the remote with the Mk II to get Japanese models to appear on the screen instead.



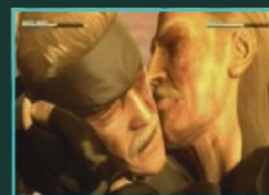
► CROTCH RECOGNITION (MGS 3)

When Volgin grabs Snake by the crotch in *MGS 3*, he instantly sees through the Raikov disguise. Kojima explains, "he realises that it's a different person because the size is different." So now you know.



► YOU CAN CHANGE PLAYBOY MAGAZINE (MGS 4)

You should know by now that you can flick through the *Playboy* magazines in *Metal Gear Solid 4*. But when you use them online, you will get different images inside the magazine to that found in single-player.



► LIQUID OCELOT KISS (MGS 4)

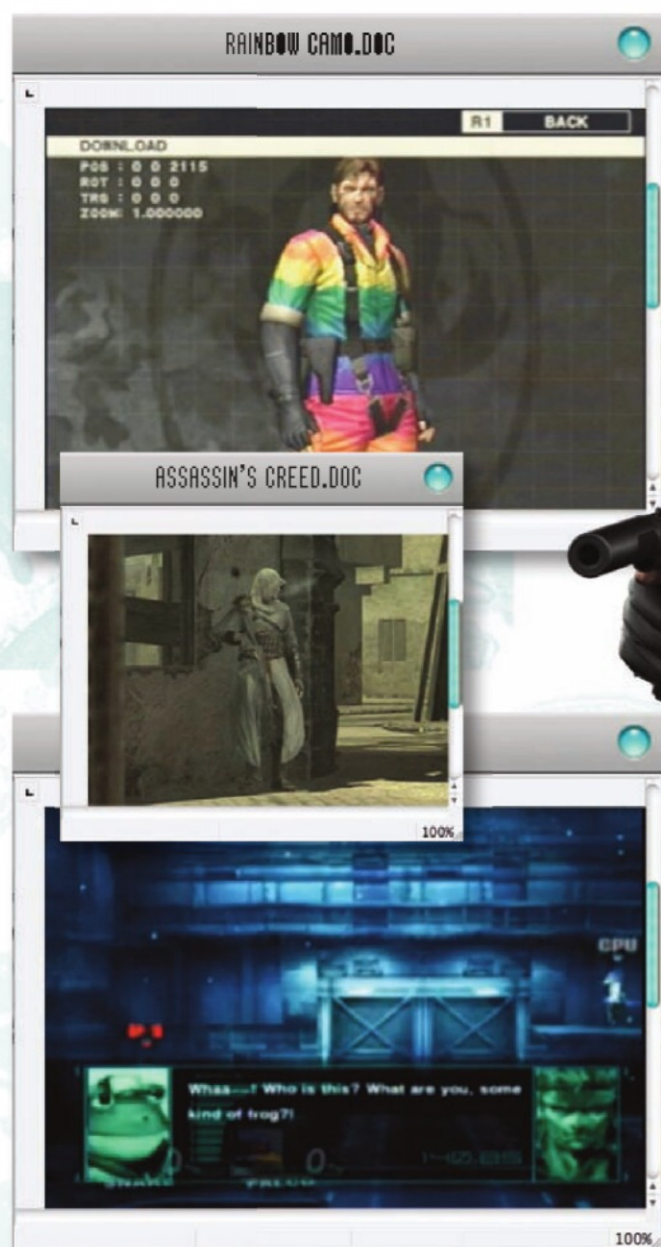
During the third part of the final battle against Liquid Ocelot, when he grabs Snake by the neck, don't press anything and Ocelot will kiss Snake.

► BEAUTIES LOVE SNAKE (MGS 4)

If you lie down during battle against any of the Beauties, they'll climb on top of Snake and straddle him.



METAL GEAR IN IMAGES



ATTENTION TO DETAIL

► BEES ON TOAST (MGS 3)

When battling The Pain, you can capture his bullet bee shots inside the Baltic Hornet's Nest, which will then give the player more stamina back when eaten.

► BANDAGED LEGS (MGS 3)

If you kill Ocelot in *Metal Gear Solid 3*, you'll cause a time paradox, causing game over. However, if you stab him in the leg after knocking him out during the cut-scene at Rassvet, there will be a bandage on his leg for the rest of the game.

► SHOOT THAT POISON ARROW (MGS 3)

If you don't remove any arrows you're hit with during your battle against The Fear, they'll stay stuck in your body for the rest of the game.



METAL GEAR SOLID QUESTIONS.DOC

METAL GEAR SOLID QUESTIONS

► IF MERYL'S RADIO FREQUENCY IS ON THE BACK OF THE METAL GEAR BOX, HOW DOES IT WORK ON PSN?

The code can be found in the game's digital manual.

► WHAT'S THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF GHOSTS YOU 'FIGHT' AGAINST THE SORROW?

Four – The Fury, The Fear, The End and The Pain.

► AND WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT?

100 ghosts, even if you've killed more enemies.

► WHAT'S THE FASTEST TIME METAL GEAR SOLID 1 WAS COMPLETED IN?

1 hour 54 minutes.

► HOW WELL DOES IT SELL?

Metal Gear Solid 4 is the second-fastest-selling game in the UK behind *Grand Theft Auto IV*.

► DO SNAKE AND OCELOT HAVE A... THING FOR EACH OTHER?

"From the first moment they set eyes upon each other, they both fell into liking each other," explains Kojima. "It is a pure love."

► WHO IS THE BOSS BASED ON?

Kojima has said she's based on British actress Charlotte Rampling.

► AND THE SORROW?

Kojima says, "take off his glasses and he's an Ed Harris-type man".

► WHAT DOES SILENT HILL HAVE TO DO WITH METAL GEAR SOLID?

It's overshadowed by the *MGS 2*-demo-with-ZOE bundle but a *Silent Hill* demo was released with the original *Metal Gear Solid*.

METAL GEAR SOLID[™] LIGHTNING BOLT ACTION

RISING

►STATUS:UNKNOWN ►DEVELOPER:KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

Unveiled at E3 2009, the **Metal Gear Solid** spin-off has been hiding underground ever since. There have been plenty of rumours and misinformation since then. We've gathered our intelligence to pass on what we know

1 DON'T KILL HUMANS

Konami has said you're not rewarded for killing humans, despite the obvious gory potential of slicing up the soft flesh of soldiers with Raiden's heated blade (ahem). We've seen him taking on cyborgs so forced encounters could happen against them, especially as you can complete *MGS: Rising* without taking a single life.



2 ABSORBING CYBORG

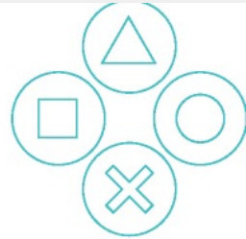
We see him absorbing the energy from the spine of the cyborg he kills. The spine glows brightly but ends a dim, lifeless grey husk after Raiden absorbs the energy. Will this be a game mechanic? Part of the central storyline? We're betting it'll be both, because...



3 ZAN-DATSU

The theme of the game is ZAN-DATSU, which roughly translated means cut ('zan') and take ('atsu'). We see Raiden slicing the cyborg ('cut') and nabbing the spinal cord ('take'), which is why it's easy to see ZAN-DATSU, the main theme of the trailer, also dominating the gameplay mechanics.





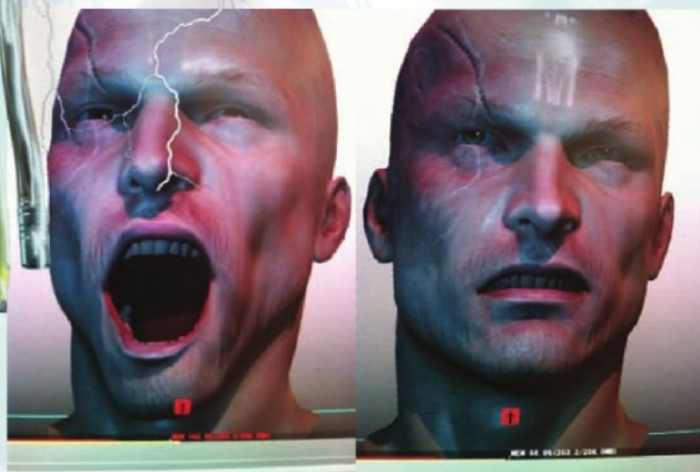
4 ABSORBING BECAUSE...

With the barcode on his face and bandage over his eye, Raiden might need to absorb the 'life force' of cyborgs to heal himself, as *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* could show how the much-maligned character eventually becomes the badass he is in *Metal Gear Solid 4*. The story won't be canon, apparently, but will take place in the same universe.



5 AVOIDING BATTLE

The precision cutting has been shown for slicing watermelons, bowling ball skittles and 'Kugeko' the UGCV in half. It's also been shown slicing guards up. What it hasn't been shown so far is slicing up weapons, which will be an easy way to avoid conflict.



6 FOX ENGINE?

It's not been confirmed one way or another whether *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* will use the Fox engine (word is it probably won't) but regardless, this is interesting. It's a facial test of a character, using the Fox engine... but the character is one Kojima didn't use from his previous games. Wonder who it would have been?

7 NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The area *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* takes place in hasn't been confirmed but the architecture looks Western. The graffiti dotted around is also Western and most guesses are currently pinning the locale on being New York. Why? Because there's previous history there with Raiden and swords, as our next point illustrates...



8 SOLIDUS SWORDFIGHT

Metal Gear Solid: Rising won't be the first time you play as Raiden using a sword. *Metal Gear Solid 2*'s final boss fight sees you having a swordfight with Solidus Snake in New York City. This is why New York is currently topping the rumour list of where *Metal Gear Solid: Rising* is set.



9 MULTIPLAYER CONFIRMED

Images of the menu screen have shown that multiplayer will definitely be an option in the final game. While Konami has warned that the menu screen itself is likely to change, no such warning was extended to multiplayer, meaning it will almost certainly be a feature of the game itself.





HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN PSN GAMES

starring

**BEAT HAZARD
ULTRA**



AS PSN GROWS, WE'RE SEEING A RISE IN SMALL INDIE TEAMS KICKING OUT THEIR OWN TITLES. TEAMS OF FOUR PEOPLE. TEAMS OF THREE PEOPLE. AND NOW, IN A PSN FIRST, A TEAM OF ONE WILL BE RELEASING BEAT HAZARD ULTRA. HERE, DEVELOPER STEVE HUNT TELLS PLAY HIS STORY...

You could make your own game. Right now. You really could. Well, perhaps not *right* now on the 109 bus back to Basingstoke, if that's where you've decided to flick through this particular issue of *Play*, but the point is that you could when you get home. Thanks to PSN, making your own games is no longer a privilege awarded to those who managed to squeeze onto 100-man teams funded by financial war chests that would make the Royals blush. It's something you could do with a small team of three or four people. Hell, if you're super determined, you could make a PSN game on your own.

Beat Hazard Ultra is one of those success stories. It's being developed by Cold Beam Games, which is the company Steve Hunt owns. He also does the programming for *Beat Hazard Ultra*. And the graphics. And the sound. And the testing and the PR and the interviews and the finances and the HR. Basically, Steve Hunt does everything. He is the owner, employer and sole employee at Cold Beam Games.

"I got a job with Digital Image Design in 1994," Steve explains, talking about his path through the games industry. "They did great but then went bust and I moved to Rage Games. They also did great but also went bust. I then moved to Warthog Games and they did great but then went bust. I then joined Juice Games, after doing well they downsized and I got made redundant. Can you see a pattern yet? The games world is a real

boom and bust sort of industry. Funny thing is that companies come and go, but I've actually worked with the same people for the last 15 years."

Yet the boom-and-bust cycle wasn't the reason that Steve decided to go it alone. "I like to have full creative control over what I do," he continues. "Games are 99% subjective and the bigger the creative team the more disagreements you have, particularly if you're trying to do something unusual which doesn't really have an existing 'template' you can use as guidance. During my industry years I'd spent too many hours in circular 'design' meetings where everyone was pulling in different directions. Not that I was right and they were wrong, it was just subjective. For example, I remember having a weeks' worth of meetings that lasted about three hours each to discuss the colour of a special effect! I wanted red, in the end it was blue. Then the game got cancelled, not sure why."

Cold Beam Games has become its own success story thanks to *Beat Hazard*, which will become *Beat Hazard Ultra* on PSN in October. It's being ported to iPad, iPhone and Android thanks to D3T, a company formed by Steve's former colleagues out of the closure of Juice Games. Cold Beam Games has two more music-driven games on the horizon, too, showing that things are going well... but how do you create your own game and get it on PSN? Here's how *Beat Hazard Ultra* made the journey in seven steps...



PREVIOUS WORK

What Steve Hunt worked on before starting Cold Beam Games...

EUROFIGHTER TYPHOON

2001 – PC

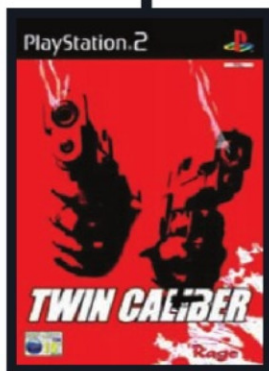
"This was a very interesting project as we mixed a dynamic campaign system with a story-driven element. Two things which on the face of it are completely at odds with each other. In this game you hopped between six pilots who were all flying missions in real-time. We also had videos of a real-life news reader bashing out newflashes during key moments of the story."



TWIN CALIBER

2002 – PS2

"A twin-stick shooter, maybe ahead of its time as it got pretty bad reviews due to the control system. However, out of all the games I've worked on, this was my favourite by a mile. We had a small team and created a ton of content in a very short space of time. We also had a really good time making this. It was in the middle of making the Xbox version that Rage Games went bust. My first, but not last, experience of being made redundant. Not nice."



LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

2004 – PC, PS2, Xbox

"Working for Warthog Games as a programmer, this was the first time I'd worked on a licensed title. It was very different from the sims I'd cut my teeth on. Great bunch of developers at Warthog. Happy days."



JUICED

2007 – PC, PS2, Xbox

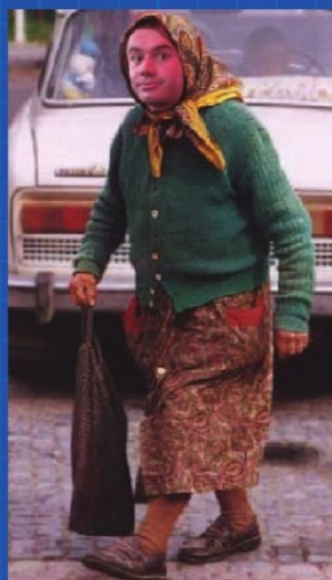
"Back with the guys from Digital Image Design and Rage, now under the name of Juice Games. Juiced was an arcade-style street racer. I was designer/programmer. The calendar and respect system was my fault... still debating whether it was a good idea or not."



JUICED 2: HOT IMPORT NIGHTS

2007 – PC, PS2, PS3, Xbox 360, DS

"The sequel to Juiced. More street racing and modding, plus all-new drifting events. This was my first 'next-gen' title. We decided after the event that we'd tried to put too many features in this game."



"I miss playing *Battlefield* at lunch time and the Photoshop wars we used to have in the office where we would paste each other's faces on to daft pictures. Here's one example!"

STEP 1 SETTING UP YOUR OWN COMPANY

"It was very, very easy. You just register your business on the Companies House website for £18 and you're off! I guess it was super easy for me as I don't employ anyone and I don't need stock or premises. The hardest part was finding a name and website that doesn't already exist. I spent ages trying different combinations of two 'coolish' words only to find most already were taken. That's why Cold Beam is a sort of odd name, but I also wanted something that didn't already make the player associate it with something else."

STEP 2 GETTING THE FUNDING TOGETHER

"My redundancy funded me to start with; I think I had about a year of funds if I tightened my belt. The first version of *Beat Hazard* was released on Xbox Live Indie Games and did really, really well. It still is doing well. Once that started to bring in the money I knew I could relax a little. Then I got the deal with Steam and that made me feel a lot more secure. Financial worries were at the front of my mind at the start, but going back to a big studio didn't enter my mind. I was determined to put all I could into this game and hope for the best. Seems to be going well so far!"

STEP 3 MEETING WITH SONY

"Sony have quite a complex approval process and a complex machine and software, so most of the time wasn't really making the game – that was already done – but learning how to use the hardware and hooking up all the platform-specific systems like input, leaderboards, sound, music, Trophies, saving/loading and so on. However, Sony has an awesome support team who are there to help you every step of the way. I even went on their free training course down in London. I was there all day and I had about 15 senior Sony staff giving me various presentations all day. It was just me, too. So it was cool to have all these top guys running around just for me!"



"You can see what the game looked like after a month or so. It looks pretty lame but I could see the potential at this point. It was then a long hard slog to get the movement, colours and gameplay right. I spent many, many hours tweaking 'magic numbers' to get that side of things looking right."



STEP 4 DOING EVERYTHING YOURSELF

"I've never seen the point in reinventing the wheel and I'm a great advocate of using middleware. Why write something that's already been done? I'm a game programmer at heart, too, and I've never been keen on getting my hands dirty with low-level code, I like bullets and explosions rather than tri-lists and shaders. However, the only part of *Beat Hazard Ultra* that I didn't write is the network layer. This uses RakNet, which took all the pain out of that side of things. But I did end up writing everything else myself."

STEP 5 WORKING ON YOUR OWN

"I really miss the banter at the office. We used to have a really good time on that front. I miss playing *Battlefield* at lunch time and the Photoshop wars we used to have in the office where we would paste each other's faces on to daft pictures. I'm not sure I get lonely. When I'm busy the days fly by and I just love being able to have ideas and just get on with it. Inevitably there are some low moments, though, fighting with the hardware is the thing that gets me down the most, but when that happens I head off to the Chill Factor in Manchester for a snowboarding session! More offices should have this facility."

STEP 6 AVOIDING THE PITFALLS

"Of course a game needs to be good and look professional, but you can also waste a lot of time tinkering. Putting your cherished game out in to the wild can be very scary. All your hard work is laid bare and people will tell you straight if it's not good. It's very easy to keep avoiding this and not releasing the game for fear of criticism or failure. I know some indie teams that have spent over three years just tinkering. Put out the game and let the community decide. If it's a winner then you can do updates and improvements or even start on a sequel. If not, get back to the drawing board quick and start something new."

STEP 7 FINAL ADVICE

"I'm lucky in that I've worked in project management, design and programming. I also know my way around Photoshop well enough to be able to do my own artwork. So if you want to go it alone you really do need to be a jack of all trades. However, you can be indie in a small team of three or four. My advice is to have a relatively simple game idea and start with the 'free to use' services like iPhone or Android. If you get good sales you can then go to people like Steam and they will be very interested. And just move up from there."

"Keep it simple, make it look nice. Be opportunistic and see what you can get for free. For example, all the videos, music, translations and testing were done for free by fans of the game. How cool is that? Amazing what you can get if you ask and give away free copies of the game. Also, get something out as soon as you've got a product in your hands. Don't sit on it tweaking and tweaking forever."



"When the basics seemed to just work fine I added a ship, which was a Learjet to start with, that could fire some blobs and AI ships made from pictures of circuit boards. This early in the project it's best to work on the risky and fundamental stuff and not get bogged down in making things look pretty."





BEST ONLINE MULTIPLAYER GAMES

(with five bonus offline ones, too)

Before the mad rush of certain games overtakes us at the end of this year, we thought it might be interesting to look over 20 of the best online games still doing the rounds on PS3. You're bound to disagree, so let us know how much you hate us on our Facebook page

20 ASSASSIN'S CREED: BROTHERHOOD



Developer: Ubisoft Montreal

Publisher: Ubisoft

Released: November 2010

Number of Players: 2-8

This is sure to cause a bit of a stink, as *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood* isn't, objectively speaking, in the upper echelons of PS3's online gaming. From our more subjective perspective, however, it is – because it offers something that makes it stand out from the rest of the crowd. It was always going to be different and we weren't let down, with out-and-out deathmatch taking a back seat to a more considered, assassination-y take on MP. Just as you'd want, really. It isn't going to take over your life like some other games on this list, but it offers a nice break from the monotony of 'me-too' online modes.



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WORMS 2: ARMAGEDDON

Developer: Team 17

Publisher: Team 17

Released: September 2010

Number of Players: 2-4

Casual, turn-your-brain-off fun for all the family/drunken mates? Yep, that's *Worms 2*. The first one, too. All of them, really – apart from the dreadful 3D versions, natch. You all know the drill: airstrike one of your mates until they throw a paddy and try to dig their way to safety, before poking someone off a cliff and laughing so hard milk squirts out of your nose.



19 BRINK

Developer: Splash Damage

Publisher: Bethesda

Released: May 2011

Number of Players: 2-16

The dictionary definition of 'bad timing' now has an image of *Brink*'s cover art below it. Released in the midst of the PSN's lengthy downtime earlier this year, it never really stood a chance. And that's a huge shame, as the class-based, objective-heavy FPS is creative, engaging and a lot of fun online. It didn't help, too, that *Brink* was pushed as having a single-player experience worth bothering with – it isn't. You can pick it up super-cheap now, stick to online (maybe offline to train yourself in its intricacies) and you'll be guaranteed one of the most unique online titles the PS3 has to offer today. It really is a game that deserves another chance.



18 RESIDENT EVIL 5

Developer: Capcom

Publisher: Capcom

Released: March 2009

Number of Players: 2-4

In single-player, *Resident Evil 5* is a ball-ache. Really, it is. Sheva is a moron of the highest calibre and her AI is bad enough to almost ruin the game. Simply hook up with a friend or stranger online and see how it becomes 'How *Resi 5* Should Be Played'. We could spout off about how annoying this is, but instead we'll take it for what it is – a fun action game. Then, of course, if you can be bothered to fork out an extra few quid for a 1.8MB download you can get hold of versus mode. It's one of those cheeky DLC offerings that Capcom is known for, but it's not actually that bad – if not entirely a reason to buy *Resi 5* in the first place.



17 MOTORSTORM: PACIFIC RIFT

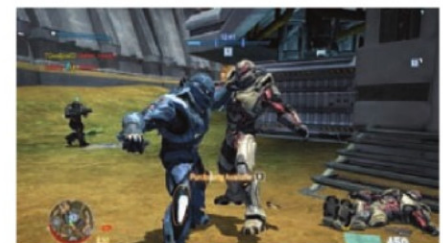
Developer: Evolution Studios

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

Released: November 2008

Number of Players: 2-12

The original *MotorStorm* didn't even have proper MP until patched, and *MotorStorm: Apocalypse* was a bit of a letdown – as such, it falls to the second game in the series to represent one of Sony's exclusive offerings in this here list. But that's fair enough, because *Pacific Rift* is a solid racer that brings gritty – literally – off-road racing for all the family. Well, all the family that can handle overheating monster trucks exploding in fiery balls of 'you've been holding (X) too long' fury. There are better racers out there, but *Pacific Rift* gets included by virtue of being PS3-only and because it offers something at least a bit different from most other racers.



16 SECTION 8: PREJUDICE

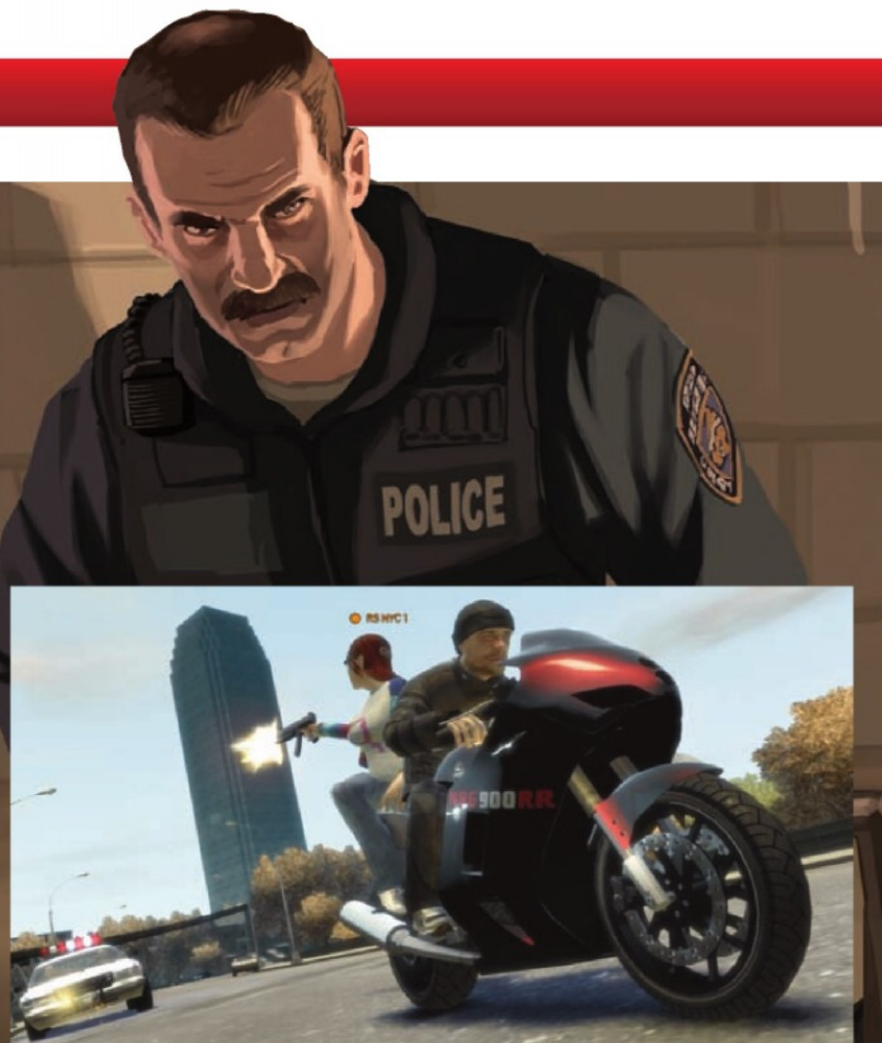
Developer: TimeGate Studios

Publisher: TimeGate Studios

Released: July 2011

Number of Players: 2-32

Are you poor? Are you also in need of some solid online FPS action that you can afford with your meagre funds? Well drop £10 on *Section 8: Prejudice* and you can get involved in one of the best (cheap) downloadable roboman-shooting action games currently available on PlayStation 3. Sure, there's not much in the way of originality or unique elements to the game, but what it does it does very well – and there's absolutely no arguing with that price. We have never yet struggled to get a game on it either, so there's clearly an audience for this budget multiplayer approach. Long may it continue.



15 GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

Developer: Rockstar North
Publisher: Rockstar Games
Released: April 2008
Number of Players: 2-16

Rockstar's crime spree epic just pipped *Red Dead Redemption* to inclusion on this list, purely because free mode is one of the funniest, most insane online games we have ever played in our collective lives. Is it even a game? Experience seems more apt. Deathmatch, Cops 'n' Crooks, co-op missions – they're all great fun and surprised us with how well-integrated in *GTA IV* they were. But it's free mode that makes it so brilliant. Wheelieing down Liberty City airport runway on a moped while someone strafes you in an attack chopper goes down in history as one of the Best Things that has ever happened in any online game, ever. It was unexpected, but *GTA IV* ended up being a fine MP title.



14 UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

Developer: Naughty Dog
Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment
Released: October 2009
Number of Players: 2-10

Arguably the best single-player game on PS3, sure. But one of the best online games? Well, yes, surprisingly. We all expected the online deathmatches and co-op to be a hasty land-grab in *Uncharted 2*, thrown in at the last minute to tick a box on a checklist that some clueless money man had drawn up in his spare time. Instead it ended up being a well-rounded, engrossing and rather deep experience that offered – and still offers – a viable alternative to other, more popular online games. And *Uncharted 3*'s MP looks to be even better.



13 HOMEFRONT

Developer: Kaos Studios
Publisher: THQ
Released: March 2011
Number of Players: 2-32

It feels like a constant battle against naysayers when we point out that *Homefront* is a very good game online, but... well, it is. It's surprisingly good, in fact, and a fine example of how just a few changes to an established formula can create a distinctive, exciting online experience. Earning battle points to purchase perks and vehicles starts things off slowly, but as skirmishes progress things escalate to such a level that the fight is unrecognisable from how it started out. Yes, some modes are more standard than others, but stick to those offering vehicles and you'll have a lot of fun – and there's a committed group of players keeping *Homefront* alive, even if its developer has died.



12 LITTLEBIGPLANET 2

Developer: Media Molecule
Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment
Released: January 2011
Number of Players: 2-4

LBP 2 makes things interesting in two ways: first, it's one of those rare experiences that is purely co-operative online. Second, it's less impressive online for playing together, more for what you can get out of it by *going* online. Don't get us wrong – it's great fun to play with three others, scuttling about, helping each other through levels and generally going "aww" a lot because it's so bloody cute. But that's not what makes *LBP 2* truly special. No, that honour falls to the creative aspects, which, once you've accessed them through them there interwebs, opens players up to literally millions of new levels and – thanks to *LBP 2* offering insane levels of customisation – thousands of new games, many of which can still be played with (or against) friends.



11 SAINTS ROW 2

Developer: Volition, Inc
Publisher: THQ
Released: October 2008
Number of Players: 2-12

One of the most underrated and overlooked videogames ever made, maybe, also has one of the most underrated and overlooked multiplayer modes of any game ever made. Maybe. Aside from your usual deathmatches and turf wars, *Saints Row 2* proves a brilliant distraction for two players. Playing co-operatively (though with some competitiveness thrown in for good measure) you can work your way through the game's main campaign, take on side missions and generally dick about to your heart's content in one of the most wilfully silly and over-the-top games we have ever played. To say *Saints Row: The Third* can't come soon enough is an understatement of rather grand proportions.

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STREET FIGHTER III: 3RD STRIKE ONLINE EDITION

Developer: Iron Galaxy Studios **Publisher:** Capcom
Released: August 2011 **Number of Players:** 2

You'd think with the name 'Online Edition' this would be in the online section, but no. According to our Glorious Leader, matchmaking is a little bit poo, so it's better to play this best version of one of the best fighting games ever made in the same room as your opponent. If only so they can't make stupid 'the connection was rubbish' excuses as to why they've lost.





10 BURNOUT PARADISE

Developer: Criterion Games

Publisher: EA

Released: January 2008

Number of Players: 2-8

This would probably end up on the list anyway, what with it being great and all. But then EA went and gave *Burnout Paradise* away to everyone through PlayStation Plus, meaning we all have (or had) it. That makes it an essential addition to your online repertoire. So there. Not only is there a comprehensive list of game modes – standard races, stunt challenges, Road Rage, Cops and Robbers and a few others – but the ease at which you can get online and challenge friends shouldn't be understated. Tap right on the D-pad. That's it. Your MP options appear. Anyone would think *Burnout Paradise* was designed with playing against your mates in mind – and it's all the better for it.



9 WARHAWK

Developer: Incognito Entertainment

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

Released: August 2007

Number of Players: 2-32

We'd call this the forgotten gem of PSN or something silly like that, but the fact is it hasn't been forgotten. There's actually still a healthy, committed community supporting a four-year-old game – and with good cause. Vehicular, on-foot and aerial combat is all covered in manic battles across a number of maps and six different (though rather standard) game modes. It might be a bit overwhelming for newcomers these days, but stick with it, your kills will start to rack up and eventually you'll be a dogfighting ace comparable to the best of them. Well, either that or you'll just give up in disgust, like Ian does every time he goes back to it.



8 EVERYBODY'S GOLF: WORLD TOUR

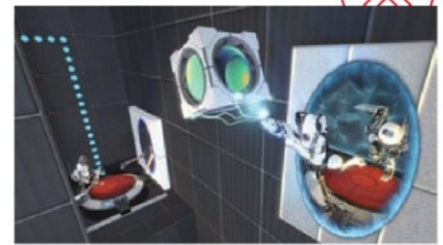
Developer: Clap Hanz

Publisher: Sony Computer Entertainment

Released: March 2008

Number of Players: 2-50

The 50-player mode might look special, but it's more a case of 50 people getting together and having a time limit set to play through a course, generally at their own pace. No, the real meat of the best golf game on PS3 comes in the smaller, more direct competitions. Not because of how great the game is (it is), not because of how well it runs online (well) and not because the lobby system is both cute and useful (both true) – no, it's because of the community. Never before have we seen a bunch of such polite, complimentary and skilful players under one virtual clubhouse roof. It's unnerving, in a way, but it's also just a shock when compared to the playing audience on many other MP titles.



7 PORTAL 2

Developer: Valve

Publisher: EA

Released: April 2011

Number of Players: 2

Co-op in one of the best games of the year could have literally been a massive turd in the middle of a field and we would have been fine with it. Well, maybe we wouldn't. Still, that's irrelevant because *Portal 2*'s multiplayer ended up being a fine companion to the main single-player campaign and, arguably, good enough to be released independent of the rest of the game as a fully fledged experience. It would place higher on the list were it not for the fact that once you've done it, you've done it – it's difficult to forget how to solve puzzles when you've already done them. Though it is still funny to 'accidentally' kill your partner.

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FIFA 11

Developer: EA Sports

Publisher: EA

Released: October 2010

Number of Players: 2-7

FIFA 11 features a robust and deep online system, true, but the true multiplayer experience is that of sitting in the same room as those you are beating (or losing to, if you're rubbish). Trash talk, gloating, showboating and samba is key here – while it's very good online, it's truly a special game when played in the same room as your opponent. Especially when you constantly add your own, irritating, commentary.



6 BORDERLANDS

Developer: Gearbox Studios

Publisher: 2K Games

Released: October 2009

Number of Players: 2-4

On the smaller scale of online conflict – and with the emphasis purely on not killing each other (we think it's called 'co-op') – *Borderlands* surprised just about everyone. Not only did it surprise: it addicted. Ohhhh, did it addict people. And, seeing as it's available for barely any pounds and pence these days, it's still more than capable of making you behave in ridiculous, compulsive ways. You will rummage through every single toilet you find, knowing damn well there will be no valuable loot in there – *but there might be*. You will argue with friends about who gets which gun. And you will laugh, because *Borderlands*, with friends, is brilliant.

ANTI-ONLINE GAMERS: REJOICE!

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ROCK BAND 3

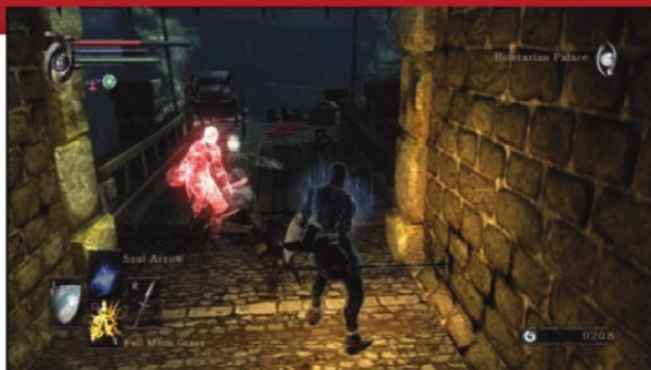
Developer: Harmonix

Publisher: MTV Games

Released: October 2010

Number of Players: 2-5

Is Harmonix's *Rock Band 3* the ultimate party game? We don't know – *SingStar* also vies for that particular title, we have to admit. But for the range of activities it allows you to take part in – and the depth at which it lets you play music – we had to let *Rock Band* pip Sony's game to the post. Getting your mates to play together as a band is one of the modern classics of videogame experiences. Or something.



5 DEMON'S SOULS

Developer: From Software **Publisher:** Namco Bandai

Released: June 2010 **Number of Players:** 2-3+

Not only does *Demon's Souls* make it onto the list through the fact it's really good fun to play with a couple of others in co-op mode – especially when they're really good at the game and can walk you through levels – but also because of how other MP elements are integrated. If you're not connected to servers, you'll miss out on the ghosts of recent heroes reliving the moment of their death, possibly clueing you in to what you need to avoid. Then there are the messages – some outright lie to you, true, but others have kept us alive more times than we can count. Shame those bastard black phantoms come invading all the time...



4 NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT

Developer: Criterion Games **Publisher:** EA

Released: November 2010 **Number of Players:** 2-8

Not content with having one racing game on the list, Criterion felt the need to up the ante with *Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit* and its Autolog feature. No more would we be resigned to using passive leaderboard systems we were expected to actually check out ourselves to find out our friends' times. No, now we would have it forced down our throats at any given opportunity – plinthsniffer2k2 has beaten your time, lol_n00b_69 has taken a photo of him beating you and as for that *bugger* SePhl0tH_69_2k2? Well, his days at the top of that particular scoreboard are numbered. It doesn't bring much new to the table with regards to what actually happens in MP, but *Hot Pursuit* does make the actual act of playing about 2.5 billion times more compulsive.



3 SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV ARCADE EDITION

Developer: Capcom **Publisher:** Capcom **Released:** June 2011 **Number of Players:** 2

The final version of *SSF IV* and, naturally, the best, *Arcade Edition* takes everything that was wonderful about the online mode of the earlier versions and... well, keeps it pretty similar. The brilliant thing about *Street Fighter IV* in general is how you can just get on with it, playing single-player and not giving a toss about actively searching out games, only to be confronted with the age-old message of 'there is some kid about to try and fight you and they'll likely just pick Ken!' (we may have got the message a bit wrong). Then there's the fact that it's just a blast to play online – smooth, balanced and a lot of fun. Unless you're losing a lot. Which you will if you play against us. Well, against Ryan.



2 CALL OF DUTY SERIES

Developer: Infinity Ward

Publisher: Activision

Released: November 2007

Number of Players: 2-16

Bear with us here, because we're sure heads will explode at this claim. The original *Modern Warfare* is still the best online *Call Of Duty* experience you can have on PS3. There, we said it. There are complaints about hacking and whatever other cheap tricks people want to use, but they're present on the other *COD* titles, too. The thing that sets *COD 4* apart is its simplicity – it's straightforward; not bogged down in ridiculous little extras and balance-destroying perks. Remember this is the reason that the *Call Of Duty* series is as big as it is these days, and with good reason: even today, the original *Modern Warfare* is brilliant fun online. Some (many?) will prefer *MW2* or *Black Ops*, but for us it always comes back to the first time Infinity Ward really ratcheted things up in the online sphere. Plus: no akimbo shotguns or commando perk.



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LARA CROFT AND THE GUARDIAN OF LIGHT

Developer: Crystal Dynamics

Publisher: Eidos Interactive

Released: August 2010

Number of Players: 2

We still don't know what we were expecting from the non-*Tomb Raider* *Tomb Raider*, but we know what we got: a fun and funny co-op experience full of imagination and the ability to blow each other up. Yes, it's playable online, but you really have to be sitting next to the person you're playing with, if only so you can punch them when they drop a bomb on your head.

1 BATTLEFIELD: BAD COMPANY 2

Developer: DICE

Publisher: EA

Released: March 2010

Number of Players: 2-24

The executive decision has been made. We've called it. It's over. Done. Finished. This is how it is – at least for now. *Battlefield: Bad Company 2* is the best online game on PlayStation 3, and here's why: because we said so. Alright, there are other reasons, like the insane level of balance, the fact it isn't just point and shoot (you can win rounds without firing a single shot) and the emphasis on genuinely working as a team. It's not as directly comparable to *Call Of Duty* online as people are quick to point out, but all the same we think it's fair to say *Bad Company 2* is the finest online FPS – the finest online game – on PS3 today. It's genuinely exciting waiting to see what *Modern Warfare 3* and *Battlefield 3* can bring to gamers trying to shoot each other around the world, though. Snipers are still terrible people who all need to die fiery deaths, mind you.



Use the **SciFiNow** flowchart to find out...



PLAY Preview

点検

Playing bad games so you don't have to

Including: Borderlands 2 avoids tedious 'Boredomlands' jokes /// Saints Row: The Third cranks up the insanity /// Little Deviants looks like Vita's sleeper hit



48 Borderlands 2

Bigger, better, broader, ballsier

WAVE 100

54 Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception PS3
What happens after Drake is left hanging from the plane? Read on.

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We check in for the final time, exclusive review coming next issue.

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As the war heats up, will anyone out there buy both FPS games?

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Impressions of the new faces.

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Naughty Dog's series shrinks down for Vita but does it still look the part?

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As the first twin-stick shooter on Sony's portable, the pressure is on.

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Find out how it'll make use of the Vita to add to the series.

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Could this be Vita's sleeper hit?

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Full look at Ninja Theory's work



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Reborn and brought down to earth



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Moon battles and planet-stabbing

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PREVIEW

The greatest feature of PlayStation

BULLY BEATDOWN

Fighting *Borderlands 2*'s wonderful new foes in its wonderful new environments

ONE THING YOU can always count on with *Borderlands* is for its character and environmental designs to be beautiful and interesting. Okay, that's two, but whatever. Here's a tour of *Borderlands 2*'s killing fields, and those you'll be killing on them.



Here's the 'Bullymong' enemy, which has a brilliant name in addition to its ability to throw rocks in an attempt to explode your head like a grape.



We would explain what's happening here on top of this dam, but we're too distracted by the pure awesome contained within.



Needless to say, the Nomad Torturer isn't particularly well liked among his peers, especially when he straps them to his shields.



The Hyperion War Loader in the background of this image is a brute, but isn't invincible.



● We can just imagine this hanging over Salvador's fireplace.



● We're not experts or anything but we reckon shooting the big guy might be a good idea.

RELEASE DATE: 2012

Borderlands 2

Guns guns guns! The Tigers are playing, TONIGHT!



Remember the original style of *Borderlands*, before Gearbox changed it to the final, cel-shaded look? For those of you who don't, it was a standard, retro-futuristic *Mad Max* vibe that caused about as much excitement in the community as a trailer for a trailer or an announcement for DLC costumes.

In fact, it's hard to imagine *Borderlands* being the success it is without that bold change. For Gearbox, the decision to change the style when it had a perfectly functional – if somewhat underwhelming – equivalent in place was the right one.

"If it had looked like any other sci-fi then it might have been forgotten. People might not have stopped and taken a look at how cool the gameplay was," Gearbox's art director Jeramy Cooke states. "We knew we had solved the mechanics – everyone was enjoying the loot and the guns at the time, all that stuff was working, people believed in the tech. But the guys always had this thing of, 'I guess it looks okay...' but we were looking for that spark and that's what the new style brought. That little bit of magic".

Turns out the change was a good call for everyone involved, even if it was painful at the time. It's an experience that Gearbox seems to have taken a great deal from, as it's aiming to pull a similar trick again for the highly anticipated sequel, this time to the game's mechanics.

There are five core areas that the developer wants to improve upon:

weapons, enemy AI, environments, character classes and the storyline and missions. So essentially everything then. Hey, we told you it's not afraid to change things up. These five changes promise to have as much bearing on the game as the art style do-over. In fact, they could be even more significant.

Gearbox knows where it went wrong with the original game, and is determined to fix it. Where better to start than with the last act of the last game then – the ending, which to many was underwhelming. Well, that's fixed apparently, according

Gearbox knows where it went wrong with the original game, and is determined to fix it

to Anthony Burch, who wrote the original game.

"I wanna put a message on the back of the box that says 'the ending's good this time, I swear'".

Indeed Gearbox states that it has listened intently to all of the feedback the first game received, and is making changes accordingly.

"We had a critical review analysis, read all the works of guys like you and read the things that you and other fans liked the most, what you guys like the least," creative director Paul Hellquist states. "Then what you liked the least went onto the list of what the sequel needs to address. At that time we just had the leads: myself, the art director, the technical director, lead level designer – the

core leadership structure of the team. We were like, 'okay, what can we do here?'"

So with the ending apparently sorted out, *Borderlands 2* begins with your character Salvador – a soldier class for the purposes of this demonstration – cast off into the icy wilderness to die by the game's chief antagonist, Handsome Jack.

Jack is the CEO of the technology and weapons manufacturer Hyperion Corp, and having taken all of the credit for you opening the vault at the end

of the first game – and pocketing the immense wealth that was in it as well – he's using his new-found status to form his own dictatorship on Pandora. Like all good dictators he's aiming to squeeze the life out of anyone he sees as a threat, and that includes Salvador, a gladiator in Jack's wildly successful beasts versus bandits coliseum who got a little too popular.

So now you're cut adrift in the sort of snowy wasteland that would make Hoth blush, and you've got to find your way back to civilisation.

Luckily Salvador has somehow fallen into an alliance with the Guardian Angel, returning from the first game. The Angel – a mysterious presence with a female voice that looks over the Vault Hunters and

guides them – also shares your dislike for Jack and his new dominion over Pandora. With her voice guiding you back to the fight, it's not long until you'll run across some of the new weapons on offer.

Borderlands is famed for its insane weapon variables, and the sequel aims to not only up the number but also to apply the procedural-generation tech to every collectable in the game, not just the guns.

Players can look forward to that randomising tech being used to create grenades, artefacts found throughout the world, as well as class modifications. Better yet. Gearbox is aiming not only to change the way items are generated but also to improve the way they feel and look. 'Silhouetting' is a big thing in the videogame industry, particularly first-person shooters: you need to know what a weapon is and does when you see it, not when you fire it.

"We're really trying to put a stamp on each manufacturer, so if a Vladov gun falls on the ground you know what it is from looking at its silhouette, not just from using it," concept artist Scott K tells us. "It's about creating the look of a gun then ripping it down to its bare components. The hi-tech guns are really smooth and curved, the boxy bandit gun that's made of junk and pieces... it's a lot of work, a lot of drawing and a lot of layers."

Borderlands 2's weapons seem to have that technique nailed. Well those made by Vladov do at least: ➤

Car vs Sand Dune Monster: we're betting on the car.

PREVIEW



Tell us this isn't the most awesome thing you've ever seen. Thought so.

every gun they make, no matter the type, apparently has a minigun for a barrel. Which is both insane and brilliant, while also helping to achieve the developer's goal.

Sadly we couldn't get our hands on those particular weapons, settling for a rifle made by manufacturer TDR. Boasting a fast rate of fire, the rifle has a devious secondary mode: the weapon can be thrown and used as an explosive, with the damage from the blast dictated by how many bullets remain in the magazine.

It won't be long until the weapon will be put to good use, because

going to be big on exploration. The demo features a few magnificent vistas to take in (there are even rumblings that you'll be heading to Pandora's moon at one point, which supposedly houses Handsome Jack's hideout). The terrain is nice and varied as well, steering away from the first game's predominant desert setting. Soon Salvador is cruising across the icy plains to rescue his buddy Roland, who has been captured by a group calling themselves the Bloodshot Bandits. On the way, two things become apparent: one is that the handling is as arcadey as ever,

shield with a bandit midget chained to the front of it.

You can deal with this in a variety of ways: shoot the Torturer, shoot both the Torturer and the midget, or shoot the midget free, who will then attack his former captor. Sadly for all involved Salvador simply hosed them both, along with anything that was near it.

This particular joy was short-lived: a Hyperion War Loader bursts onto the scene, snatching Roland and calling in reinforcements to cover its escape. A three-way battle emerges, and with the ground troops either busy or dead the stragglers are mopped up easily before taking on the Loader itself.

One fierce firefight later the Loader has changed into a Constructor, and now it's really pissed. Sadly, this is where the demo ends.

The demonstration has done enough, however, to convince us that *Borderlands 2* has the tools necessary to create what could well be a fantastic experience and a worthwhile sequel. Forget that Gearbox had a hand in the absolutely terrible *Duke Nukem Forever*: almost everything else that the firm has produced, from *Half-Life: Opposing Force* on PC to *Brothers In Arms* and the original *Borderlands* has been high quality. We expect nothing but the same from *Borderlands 2*.

Borderlands 2 is being developed by Gearbox Software. For more information and to see how the game is coming along visit www.gearboxsoftware.com

Almost everything Gearbox has produced has been high quality. We expect nothing but the same from *Borderlands 2*

you're not the only presence on the ice. A 'Bulymong' is there as well: an ape-like creature that wants you dead, yesterday.

The Bulymong likes to show off that he's not that thick by throwing things at you for distraction while closing the distance. He's not too difficult to see off, however, and soon we're testing out another of *Borderlands 2*'s new features: improved vehicles.

The biggest addition to *Borderlands*' already-fun driving is that you can now have four players in a vehicle at one time, solving the original game's problem of not enabling players to all bundle into a mode of transport at one time.

Which is welcome news considering that *Borderlands 2* is

with the buggy bouncing around the environment with ease. The second is that the snow and ice Salvador was travelling on before is thinning out as we career onto warmer planes. In the distance is an imposing dam: our target and Roland's prison.

Arriving in a screech of tyres and a hail of gunfire, Salvador and co are soon taking on the bandits. AI seems to be improved: there now appears to be distinct roles for the enemy to play out, with foes calling for a medic if wounded or backup if outnumbered.

Suddenly after a short firefight, a new enemy crashes out into the fray, dubbed the Nomad Torturer. Turns out his name's not ironic: he's wielding an imposing riot



Tsk: doesn't Salvador know that the faux-hawk haircut is sooooo over?

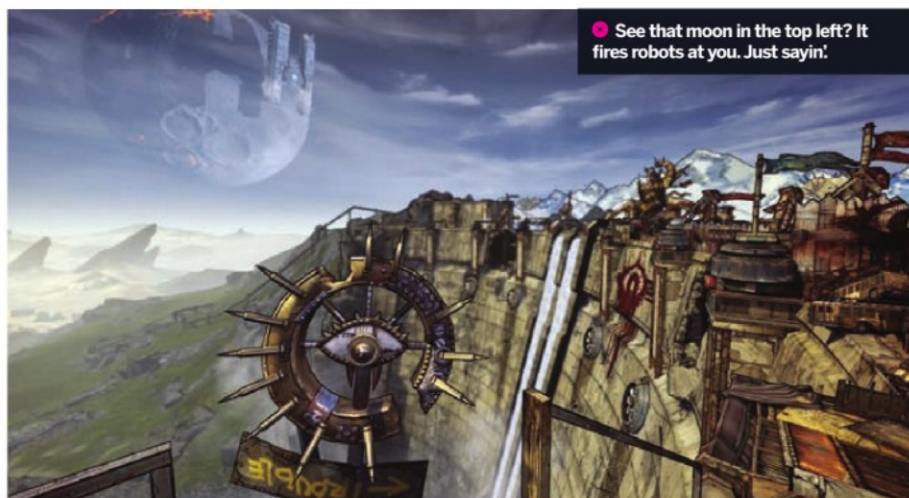


WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's *Borderlands*, people! It's *Diablo* with guns!
- You can now ride together! Because it was a bit dumb you couldn't before.
- More weapons!
- It's going to have loads of downloadable content (probably).

READ ME

Return to Pandora in this lootin', shootin', action RPG, and remember to bring guns. Lots of guns.



LOOTING AFTER NUMBER ONE

How to level up in the wasteland

AMONG ALL OF *Borderlands 2*'s promises of gunfighting and stunt driving it's easy to forget that the game is as much about looting for items and upgrades as it is shooting people's legs off. Unfortunately, Pandora boasts one resource that everyone wants: Eridium. Eridium is the key to upgrading the game's 87 billion (approx figure) weapons. Players can choose whether to sell the resource to make some cash or to use it to acquire rare weapon parts. The skill system as a whole has also seen a big overhaul, with Gearbox's express intention being to make comprehending your potential upgrades far easier than before.



I CAN'T COMMENT ON QUADRUPLE WIELDING!



SCOTT KESTER
Concept designer

The success of *Borderlands* was one of the biggest surprises on PlayStation 3. Now, with the sequel in the works, Gearbox tells us why the next one will be harder, better, faster, stronger...

Was *Borderlands* a surprise success?

Yeah, we were very happy with it. We weren't sure how it was going to be taken, because of the mix of role-playing, shooting and art style. We really thought people would enjoy it. We just weren't sure how it would sell.

What were your initial expectations for how *Borderlands* would sell or how it would be accepted?

We knew we had something that was a little different and we knew, internally, it was a very solid game. It's such a... you're not totally sure how people are going to take to it or how it's going to sell. Once we started hearing the feedback, reviews were pretty solid and word of mouth was really good, we were very happy that people started taking to it.

You mentioned in the presentation that you're focusing on visual feedback such as guns looking different without needing to check stats and so on. Was visual feedback the main thing you wanted to address?

There are a lot of things we wanted to address in *Borderlands 2*. More environments, redoing the entire weapons system. We have a guy that's dedicated to weaponry and he's just nonstop. He's a beast. We didn't have him before. Now we do and we feel that shows through in weapon design. But from the characters to the environments, reinventing the quest systems, it's hard to pinpoint. From a visual standpoint, we knew what we wanted to do when we finished the first game. When that was wrapped it was like, 'okay, we want more environments, more enemies, more diversity'. One of the things that we got pinged on was that the landscape was a little monotone in the first game, so we wanted to give you

more variation. We're really trying to create characters, weaponry and gear that will appeal to lots of individuals. Even more so than the last game. Oh, and that was one of the things, too, with the guns being different, who doesn't want to hold two guns? We have so many guns and when you think about those combinations, that was a promise that we felt was really strong.

Not tempted to create a character with four arms and introduce quadruple wielding?

I can't comment on that. [laughs]

When *Borderlands* was first revealed, it had a different look to what it ended up with, and its concept art artwork runs contrary to the realistic, military vibe of FPS games nowadays. Was that a big risk?

It was a big gamble but we knew, looking at the game at that time, it wasn't as special

We're doing all we can to give the players who loved the first game more of what they loved

as we thought the game design was. It felt a little bland. So for the art style, several of us came on and we really went at it. We say, this isn't working and we wanted to be distinct because our game was distinct. No offence to familiar game-makers, we just wanted a style of our own that we felt complemented how the game worked. It was definitely a gamble, it was kind of at the 11th hour. We weren't sure how people would take to it. As we were doing the art style and redesigning the characters, I came in on that and a lot of the other artists there... we were definitely a little nervous. The response was pretty positive. It was positive more than it was negative.

You probably saw the infamous Michael Pachter quote suggesting *Borderlands* would flop. How did you react to that?

I mean, we obviously didn't feel the same way. [laughs] And we're happy that other people didn't feel the same. Obviously we weren't real happy to hear a statement like that but we're happy with the success.

The FPS genre is currently framed by the *Battlefield 3* versus *Modern Warfare 3* showdown. Where do you see *Borderlands 2* fitting into that?

We're not directly competing with that, necessarily. We're more about the co-op side of things whereas those guys are more about the competitive side. And just with our role-playing aspect of it with all of the gear and all of the loot, we feel we're taking some elements from traditional FPSs and melding it with that.

Obviously, you want to compete with those guys but they're doing their thing really well and we want to do ours.

What would you say the biggest strength that drew people to *Borderlands* was?

I think it was the co-op nature of the game. The loot mechanic was really strong and we knew there were a lot of players who grew up playing *Diablo* or any game that's about that loot. It was a really big sign when as we played the game so much during development, we still kept playing the game. Or even when you went in and you were just testing something like a bug, you'd still go over to the treasure chest and you'd open it, even though you knew in a second you'd close down. You'd still pick it up! So it was like, okay, we have something here. [laughs] As more people kept playing it, they got the same addiction. I think





the co-op nature of it drew a lot of people, it had a lot of word of mouth. Split-screen was pretty well received. A lot of people don't do that any more and now we're really going over the UI so it works better in split-screen. Now you can play two-player on one screen and still get online and play with other people, but I really think the co-op nature was a big draw.

We often get people emailing the mag about split-screen, do you think it's still an important part of gaming?

We all feel very confident that if we hadn't put split-screen in, somebody might not have... I think more people were exposed to it. We heard story after story of 'yeah, I wasn't sure about it and then I went to my friend's house and played split-screen and it was totally awesome.' Then they run out and buy it and word of mouth spread. Our sales slowly went up instead of peaking and then slowly going down. I really feel that was a big mechanic, you know, 'oh what gun has he got? I want that!' and then you'd want to show it to your friends.

Now you're working from a position of expectation rather than coming out of nowhere, has that changed the development process at all?

Well, one of the really great things about it is when you're developing a game, you go through twists and turns. Like... changing art style, right before the game is finished. [laughs] So we knew we had proven the concept. We knew there was an audience for it. It's something we believed in all along and it was nice to see reassurance from the public. We knew what we wanted to do when we finished that first game. And we did some of that with the DLC. We probed some areas, tried some new things, but it's been a lot easier in

development. Even though it's so much work, a lot of those decisions have worked and they were accepted well.

Was the sequel on the cards before you started making the *Borderlands* DLC or something that only happened after the DLC was a success?

We wanted to support the game. We knew and we like to hope a lot of people liked the game, so we really committed to the DLC. We really tried to do a good job of it. Once development of the game was done, we started looking at that. And that was the first time our company had done downloadable content. We always knew, well, we were hoping that we were going to do a sequel. But you never know what's going to happen. So we wanted to support *Borderlands* as best we can. Show the customers we really care about them.

Did you think about including deathmatch-style multiplayer in *Borderlands*?

Yeah, we did. It's something that we're still thinking about and we're not talking about any aspects of that yet. We already smashed two genres together to create one so let's not get too ahead of ourselves. [laughs] It really eats into our development time to make the main core game as solid as possible.

We've already asked you about what your expectations were for *Borderlands*, so same question for *Borderlands 2* – what are your expectations?

Borderlands was received well so we hope this will be as well! We're doing everything we can to give the players who loved the first game more of what they loved and to create content so maybe someone who was sceptical of the first game will give it a try. ☒

● Gearbox has considered introducing deathmatch-style multiplayer to *Borderlands 2*.



● *Borderlands*' unique art style make it stand out from other popular FPSs like *Battlefield* and *Call Of Duty*.





RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception

What happens after Drake gets thrown out the plane?



Chances are, you've already seen Sony's game demo of *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception*. The pained conversation between Elena and Drake as they part ways at the airfield, the dramatic reunion as she helps him onto the cargo plane, the ambush by the guard in the air and the dramatic tumbling

of the truck and netting out of the plane's rear. But what happens next? Sony gives us an exclusive look behind closed doors to find out what becomes of *Uncharted's* hero...

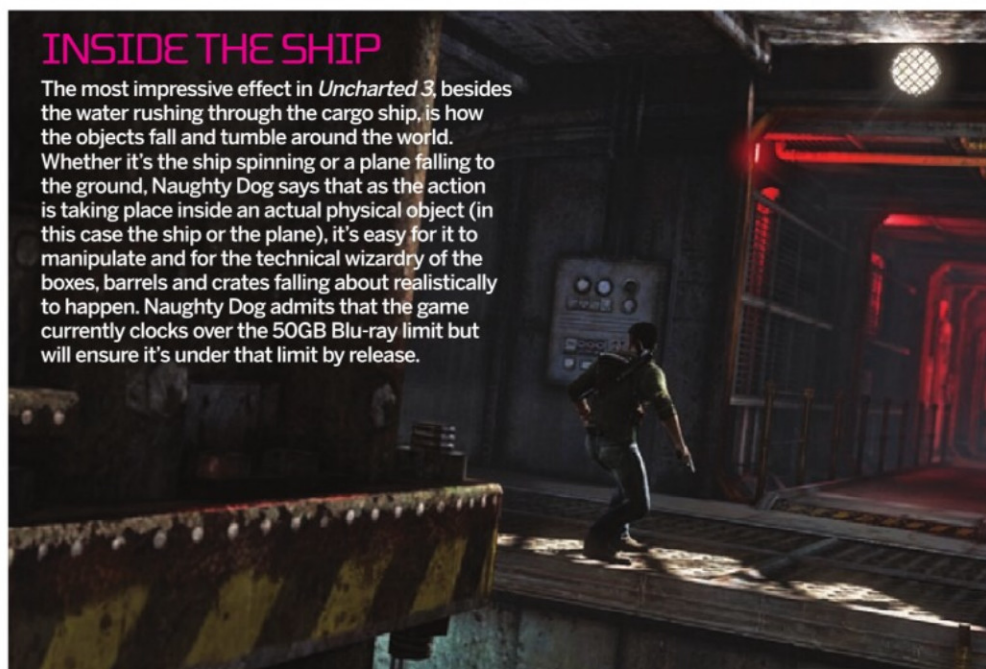
For the latest updates and gossip on the third in the *Uncharted* series, point your browsers at www.naughtydog.com. Or maybe just type in the address. Probably easier.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The live demo concludes with Nathan Drake clinging onto truck netting flying out of the back of the plane. So what happens next? Drake slowly climbs back up and the guard we thought had been kicked out the plane is also clinging on. This time, Drake makes sure and pulls him off the plane to his death and clambers back inside, only to face a gunfight against the guards waiting for him. Explosions rip through the plane, the lights die, emergency lights fizz into life and another blast tears a chunk out of the plane's side. We see the ground rushing up through the hole, Drake narrowly clings on and... that's it. It explains the plane crash in the press shots but how does he survive?

INSIDE THE SHIP

The most impressive effect in *Uncharted 3*, besides the water rushing through the cargo ship, is how the objects fall and tumble around the world. Whether it's the ship spinning or a plane falling to the ground, Naughty Dog says that as the action is taking place inside an actual physical object (in this case the ship or the plane), it's easy for it to manipulate and for the technical wizardry of the boxes, barrels and crates falling about realistically to happen. Naughty Dog admits that the game currently clocks over the 50GB Blu-ray limit but will ensure it's under that limit by release.



NEW MP MAP

In addition to finding out what happens to Drake after he finds himself dangling from the back of a plane at 10,000 feet, we also got to try out one of the new multiplayer maps, Desert Village. What makes this map unique is the sandstorm that rolls in during the match, making it impossible to see more than a few feet in front of you and turning enemies into threatening is-he-or-isn't-he silhouettes lit up against the swirling dust. It's an impressive effect and Naughty Dog has resisted the urge to overuse it, too, making it more of a rare opportunity to rush opponents rather than something that can consistently be relied upon.





● We'd say that looks 'relatively' on the Entertainment-o-meter.



CO-OP MP

Dicking about: together

COMPETITIVE MULTIPLAYER

HAS been axed for *SR: The Third* with Volition instead focusing on making the co-operative aspects of the game better than last time around. What's better than having a city as your playground? Having someone to share it with, naturally. It's things like this that make us go from 'excited about *SR3*' to 'unreasonably excited about *SR3*'.



● Steve Burns, last night.



● Don't worry – there's still Man-Shooting involved.

RELEASE DATE: 18 NOVEMBER

Saints Row: The Third

Put more swing in your ding-a-ling



You can change the size of your character's penis on *Saints Row: The Third*.

Right, preview over. Move along. All you ever wanted to know about the game is encapsulated in that opening statement. After all, what else could the game do to draw you in if it hasn't already? You don't even have to be an appreciator of the schlongal form to at least find it amusing that this option exists.

Yes, this is *Saints Row: The Third* and with each passing day we yearn more for it. The trailers have shown it to be one of the more outlandish of recent games, possibly only equaled by *Asura's* 'planet-stabbing' *Wrath*. Hands-on time has shown it to be exactly the sort of playground we hoped for, and what is looking like being a fantastic follow-up to the under-appreciated second game.

There will be a distinct audience for *SR: The Third*, of that we have no doubt. It will not appeal to everyone and there will be

those turned off by its self-aware wackiness. To you people we say this: please grow a soul. In a world of 52,000 Man-Shooting games released every ten seconds it's nice to see a game – even if it does include Man-Shooting and may well end up being a mass pile of sexist muck – that has some *fun* with it. That doesn't take itself too seriously. That remembers it's a game. So we'll do the standard review thinking. We'll judge it for whatever graphical glitches might show up. We might even reintroduce a specific rating for 'gameplay', whatever that means. But there's going to be a fairly big part of our brain that's uncritically crying with joy the entire time we're playing *Saints Row: The Third*.

Oh, you can change your character's boob size as well. But that's just perverted, obviously. You perts.

Saints Row: The Third is being developed by Volition, Inc. Check out www.saintsrow.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- We can't stop watching the trailers. It. Looks. Brilliant.
- In fact, even if you have watched them, watch them again.
- Seriously – just go watch the trailers if you haven't seen them already.
- And again and again and again. As we've already said: Brilliant.

READ ME

The original *Saints Row* never came out on PS3. This isn't that bad a thing, as it was nowhere near as funny as *SR2* was or *SR3* is looking to be.

PREVIEW



● We're liking the art style, and Dante's scythe.



● Look at those boots. They're so last season.



● Admit it: this looks pretty cool. Go on.

YOU GOT SATIRE IN MY DEVIL MAY CRY!

Does Ninja Theory have a 'message'? If so, why?

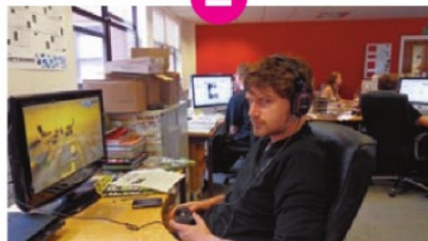
IF THERE'S ONE rule we live by, it's not looking to the *Devil May Cry* series for any sort of deep and meaningful context. We don't care. So we're a little worried that Ninja Theory might have gone a little mad and put in some comment on society or other nonsense like that. After all, as a British-based developer, surely these CCTV cameras are a comment on the fact that the UK has more of these infernal machines per square inch than anywhere in the world? We hope not: maybe it's just the Red Bull and looming deadline talking. But if not, then we're going to have to have serious words.



+



=



● Enemy design looks interesting, although we're hopeful Ninja Theory can keep the originality up throughout.



RELEASE DATE: TBA 2012

DmC

Fanboys may cry, more like



It's been a rough year or so for Ninja Theory. First labour of love

Enslaved sells around 15 copies, most of them to the mothers of the development team. Then, Ninja announces a partnership with Capcom to reboot *Devil May Cry*. Cue internet explosion as an army of fanboys that would make even Dante reconsider his chances of taking them all on cry into their *DMC 3: Special Editions*.

Well we've seen it now, and it's looking nowhere near as bad as first anticipated. We'll leave our final judgements until we've played it, but for now *DmC* could actually be – gasp – good.

During our recent time with the game we saw three areas, each depicting Dante in markedly different environments, which handily showed off his skills. Amazing that – it's almost as if the developer put this demo together on purpose!

Anyway, the first section of the demo was called Big Brother. In true *Devil May Cry* fashion it took place in an old Gothic town. Dante is strutting through it, surrounded by yellowish ghosts who appear to be neutral. Suddenly, a CCTV

camera spots Dante and turns into a Demon Eye. After a sarcastic aside to one of the ghosts, our man springs into action.

It's still combo-heavy, and Dante still has that ridiculous attitude, but Ninja Theory has obviously been keen to stamp its authority on the franchise. Like in *Enslaved*, the camera zooms in to focus on spectacular moments of action. We're not too sure about this technique ourselves: we like to see everything that's going on around us in our fighting games, from *Double Dragon* to *Devil May Cry*. We can already imagine the wailing that's going to take place should this mechanic obstruct players' views of upcoming threats, but we'll let it slide for now.

The combat in this section is as stylish as you would anticipate, with Ninja Theory capturing Dante's 'cool' demeanour well. Wielding a scythe and chain, Dante uses them to launch himself into the air and into a glide before dishing out more punishment to his foes, this time in the form of a charged projectile, fired from his sword, that dices any enemy it encounters.

Despite the fact that there was only one enemy type in the demo

Ninja Theory is promising that there will be more (obviously). Something of more interest, however, was the music: twinned with the ranking system, the better you do in combat the louder and more complicated the music gets, adding the chorus, vocals and so on. It's a cool idea, and we hope to see more imaginative additions like this from the developer.

The second stage was called The Secret, and featured Dante, in his 'Angel' form exploring a netherworld. It was pretty platform-heavy, with floating structures linked by chains, floating buildings overlooking an ocean: a very surreal look. Dante has three forms: Human, Angel and Demon, with Ninja Theory wanting to give players a large amount of combos to mess around with, but experiment and find out which moves work best for them.

During this section we also saw that Dante had the ability to slow down time, which surely confirms that this is a prequel and that it is both set and developed in the year 2001. Dante uses this ability to fight his enemies, although we can't confirm whether or not he's wearing sunglasses and talking

into a Nokia phone while he's going about it.

The third section is called The Crush, which was short but oh so sweet. Another Gothic-style level, the difference here is that Dante is trying to outrun the world, which is coming down around him. Crashing into a cathedral, one of the yellow ghosts tells Dante that the exit is on the far side of the building. As he smashes his way through, the cathedral starts to disintegrate, making Dante leap between falling debris before sliding out of the window, where the demo ends. Well designed, stylish, exciting: it was this part of the demo that had us really excited for what this version of *Devil May Cry* could achieve.

That said, Ninja Theory still has a way to go with its attempt to put its own stamp on the series. We're still not convinced that all of its parts can fit together as a whole, but again we're going to leave those calls for when we've got our hands on playable code.

Combo-heavy games, whether they be hack-'n'-slashers or fighters, need to be played to be appreciated properly, which is why the backlash against *DmC* so far has been rather stupid. We're cautious, but we wouldn't be surprised if Ninja Theory managed to pull this off. And if it does, expect it to sell more than 15 copies.

DmC is currently being developed by Ninja Theory. Check out www.capcom-europe.com for more info.

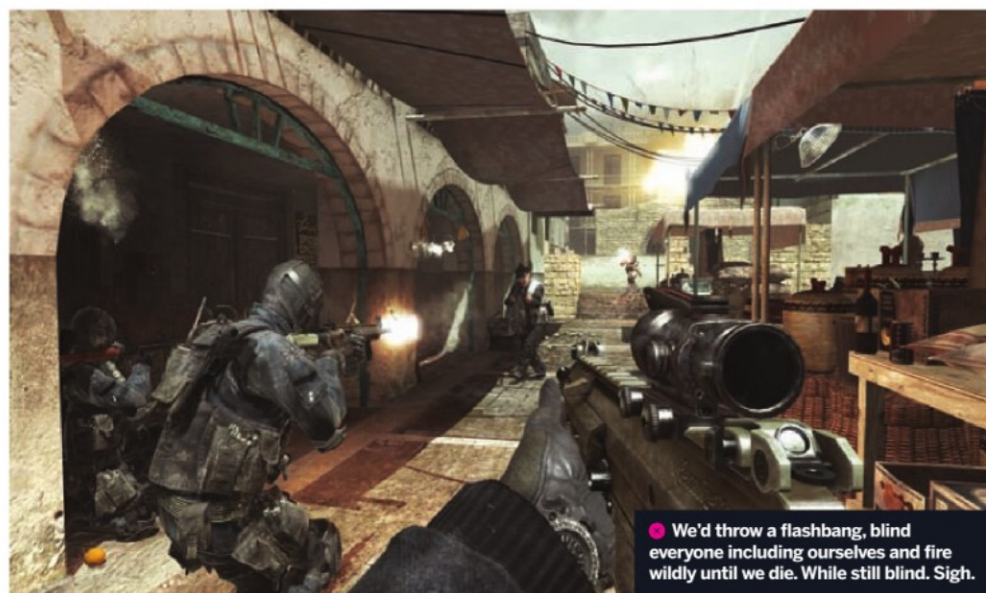
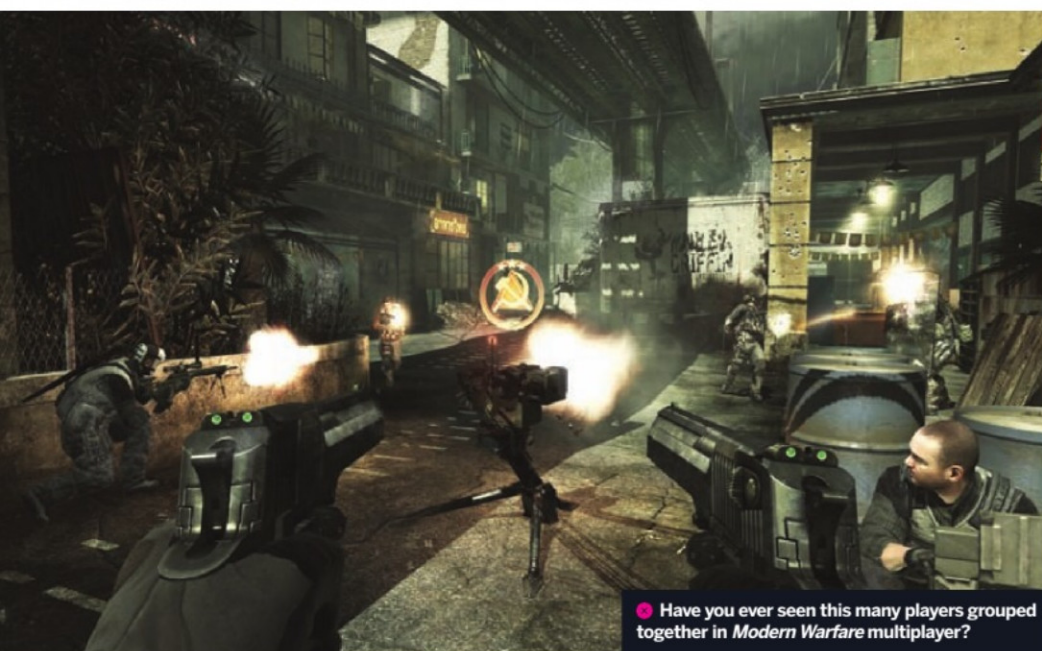
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- ❑ Looks to retain the size and scale of previous *DMC* games.
- ❑ Interesting link between the scoring system and the music.
- ❑ Ninja Theory knows how to make things getting hit with stuff look cool.
- ❑ We can't wait to see fanboy reaction when it's actually good.

READ ME

DmC is a about a promising Western developer attempting to reboot a Japanese franchise, and all of the troubles it faces on its epic journey.

PREVIEW



NOT THE PREDATOR

It's now called the Reaper

YOU MAY HAVE noticed a reference to the Predator missile in the main text. Well, that's only half true. It's now known as Reaper and although it serves the same purpose, there are subtle differences. First of all, it's fired from a vehicle before crashing back down on the ground. Second, the camera is now in full colour, so you can spot enemies without squinting. The biggest difference is that unlike the Predator, we don't have a screenshot of the Reaper in action, so here's a screenshot of multiplayer action that we didn't use last month. Mmm. Brown.



FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3

The game mode you won't care about

PS3 We're not going to go over multiplayer yet again. We had approximately 13 trillion pages on *Modern Warfare 3*'s multiplayer last issue. Or it may have been six. Our decaying, bullet-rattled brains makes our memory fuzzy. Point is, you know *exactly* what the deal is.

But Spec Ops! It's what Robert Bowling keeps shouting about, so maybe we should pay attention. The Spec Ops mission we played in *Modern Warfare 3* sees IEDs in a bombed-out city that need to be defused to complete the mission. The IEDs are in small sacks lying about the roads and their position changes every time you play, which means learning where they are isn't a valid tactic (unless you play enough to learn where every potential position is but then you'd be partially insane, so we're going to ignore that). As always, a timer begins once the mission kicks off, with a final rating awarded depending on how long you took.

Player one is in a juggernaut suit and by that we mean the big, grey, damage-soaking shields rather than an embarrassing Marvel cosplay. He's slow and an easy target. Unfortunately, he's also the one having to do the defusing, which means lumbering around after the IEDs. Player two is the

rooftop sniper, keeping the streets clear of potential threats and spotting targets. More importantly, player two has access to a radar which flags up the IEDs and predator missiles.

Why are predator missiles important? Because tanks roll in. And helicopters. And huge swarms of infantry. It promotes teamwork, somewhat artificially it has to be said, but it promotes teamwork nevertheless. It's a cut above anything seen in the original Spec Ops if only because it's been designed with two players having two very distinct, very different roles instead of two players hiding in a tiny bush because it's a stealth mission and four loud feet are worse than two.

Is revamped Spec Ops enough to tilt the upcoming grudge match with *Battlefield 3* in Activision's favour? Hardly. That will fall to the balance of multiplayer and how the campaign stacks up. But regardless, for those who have decided they're siding with *Call Of Duty*'s camp this year, the new Spec Ops mode is a very nice bonus indeed.

Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3 is being developed by a young start-up studio called Infinity Ward, who apparently also made the other games in the series. Infinityward.com for your updates.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- BOOM!
- CRASH!
- BANG!
- WALLOP!

READ ME

The third outing in the *Modern Warfare* series, the multiplayer-focused shooter will focus on the slick pace and monster production values that powered the previous titles.

OPERATION: CO-OPERATION

The co-op we played was a simple setup: a terrorist has defected, we needed to get him out of the apartment block he was being held in. Move in from the ground floor, work up, get him out of the town. Simple, right? Well, yes, apart from the whole 'having to do it quietly' and 'working together' thing, meaning our night/thermal vision silenced sniping would have to be co-ordinated and accurate. Basically, it forces you to work as a team, more than simply running and gunning at the same time. It's also hard. Read into that what you will – we read into it: they're some Very Good Things.

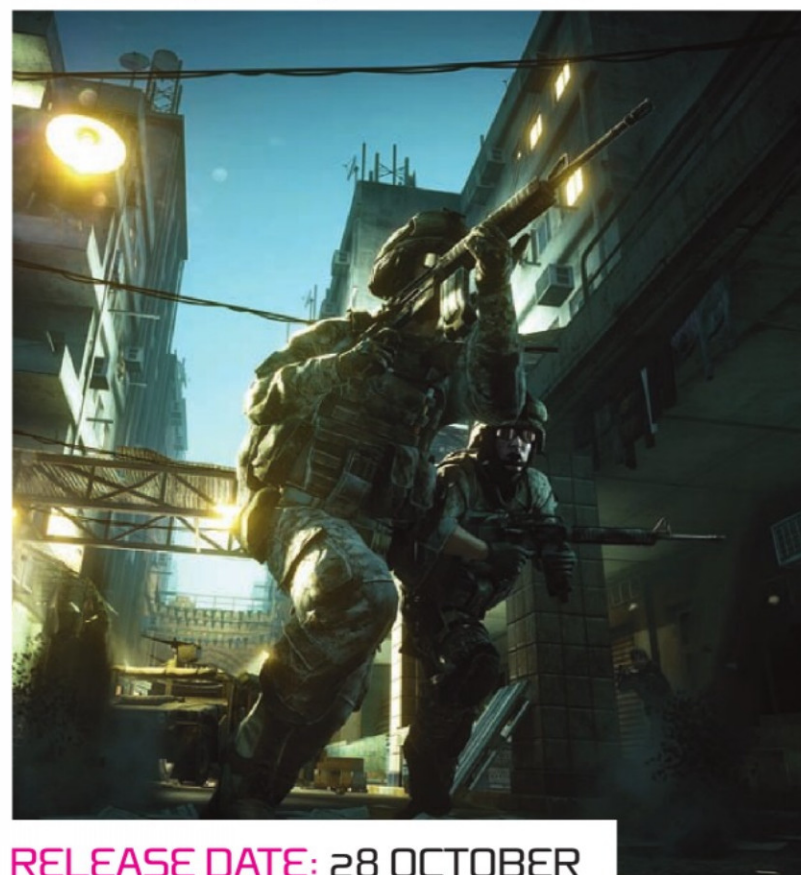
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SPOT THE DESTRUCTION

Though the co-op thing is a new touch to the *Battlefield* series, there's still enough about it to remind you this is the game you've played before or are looking forward to. The destruction mechanic, while not as prevalent as we have been led to believe via trailers and demos, adds strategy and tension to encounters. Then there's the inclusion of spotting in co-op, which is nothing short of a masterstroke. This means the two of you can actually act as spotter and sniper, counter-sniping the hidden enemies littering the rooftops. It's such a simple, subtle touch but one that – as we're seeing – DICE is implementing in interesting, and good, ways.



RELEASE DATE: 28 OCTOBER

Battlefield 3

We play co-op, so you don't have to.
But you probably still should

PS3

It's not just single-player in *Battlefield-Land* – no, there's multiplayer, too. Oh wait, we already know that. But! There's also co-operative action in the shape of a separate campaign clocking in at about 30 per cent shorter than the main game. We've only been and bloody

played it, too. None of this namby-pamby 'other format' rubbish either – we've played it on PS3. We know how it looks, feels, and smells (slightly of gammon). Here are some thoughts.

Battlefield 3 is being developed by DICE. Check out www.ea.com/battlefield3 for more details.

3



SEXY BEAST

No, the PS3 version does not look as good as the PC version. It was never going to, and it's a pretty irrelevant point so isn't much of a comparison worth making. Though we *would* say that. Anyway, *BF3* is very much beautiful in its own right, though not the order of magnitude better looking than *MW3* we might have expected. But while it isn't straight-up gorgeous (well, it is, but you get the point), the Swedish offering brings a host of atmospheric touches that raise the experience – the sound of TVs in the apartment block, lovely particle effects and a general ambience gives it all a far more organic feel than the comparatively sterile *COD*.



RELEASE DATE: EARLY 2012

FIFA Street

Reclaim the streets...with nutmegs?

PS3 Finally, it seems that EA has been listening to the obviously brilliant discussions that swirl around the **Play** office and decided to act on them. No, the publisher isn't bringing back *Road Rash* or *Desert Strike* just yet. But it is bringing back *FIFA 98*'s amazing indoor football mode. Kind of.

FIFA Street (not to be confused with, er, *FIFA Street*, which came out ages ago) is being developed by the actual *FIFA* team you see, and as the name handily implies this rebooted venture is all about playing the beautiful game in the sort of outrageous showboating style that would make Ronaldo blush. Which means that, yes, indoor football is back! Yay.

EA is promising that this will have the depth and complexity of the 'real' *FIFA* games. We hope so, because the last, massively trick-heavy 'Street' title was fun for the short amount of time before you either got bored of the same tricks or your brain couldn't suppress Ronaldinho's ghastly visage any more. If both happened at the

same time, your brain simply deleted itself.

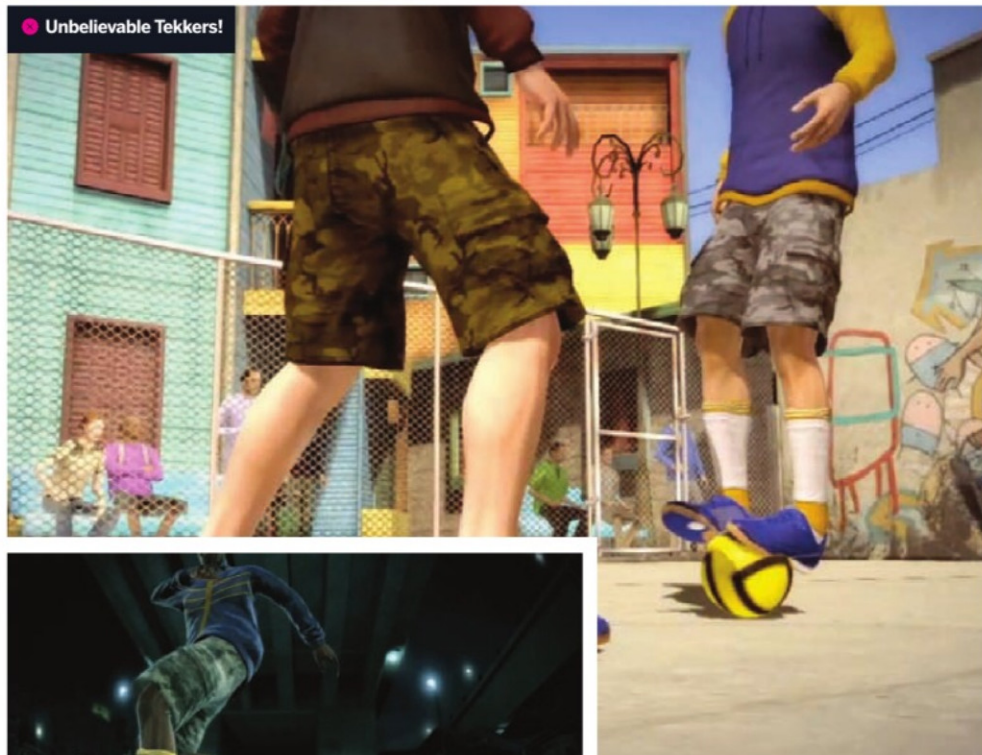
Anyway, we must admit we're pretty excited about *FIFA Street*, and not just because EA is up to its usual shenanigans of renaming standard features with some yawnsome PR name (this time it's Street Ball Control, if you're interested). Nope, we're excited because we're hopeful that the full-size *FIFA* gameplay can be replicated on a smaller playing area, just like the good old days of 13 years ago.

As ever, you'll be able to play against the biggest stars in world football (or team up with them yourself) in 35 locations around the world. There are also different disciplines of play to partake in: between one-on-one, five-a-side and futsal, there should be more than enough here to satisfy anyone that's ever watched Wayne Rooney's *Street Striker* and thought: blimey, he's ugly and also, that looks quite good fun.

FIFA Street is being developed by EA. For more info on the game check out www.ea.com/uk/football/fifa-street

Oh, look at how moody it is. Street soccer is serious business

Unbelievable Tekkers!



AROUND THE WORLD

'Merking' fools across the globe

WANT TO KNOW exactly where you'll be pulling off the sort of tricks that even Mr Woo himself (Google him) wouldn't even dare attempt? Then you've come to the right place.

There are 35 locations in the full game, including London, Paris, Tokyo, Berlin, Venice, New York and Barcelona.

Speaking of Barca: club teams are included too, so expect everyone online to pick 2011's Euro champions *all the time*.

Show your skills in one-on-one, five-a-side or futsal matches.

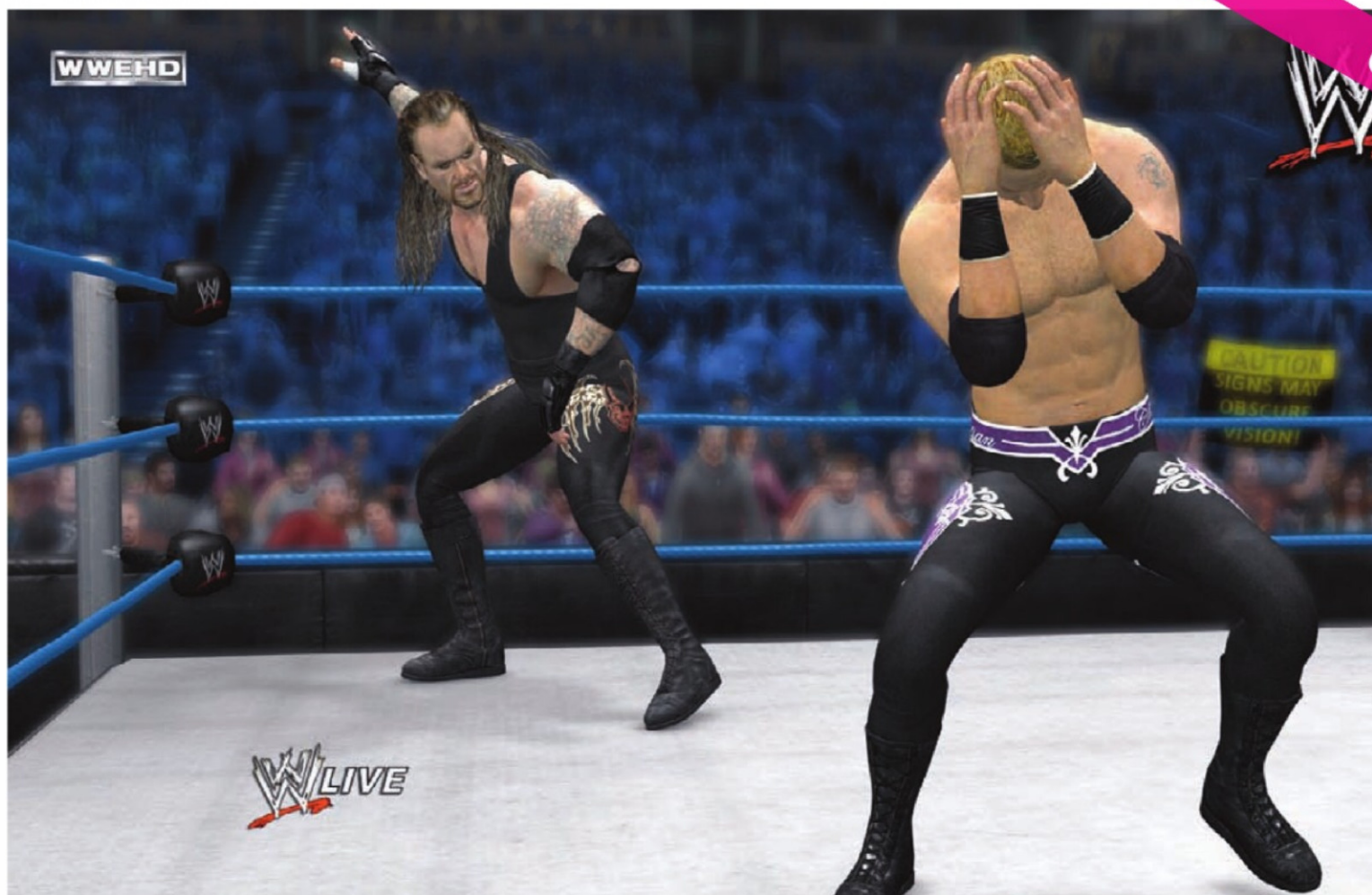
WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Nutmeg!
- Overhead!
- Rabona!
- Hopefully no Ronaldinho!

READ ME

Find traditional football far too boring to contend with? Think all football games should be more like Nike adverts than sports? Then *FIFA Street* is your game.

UPDATE

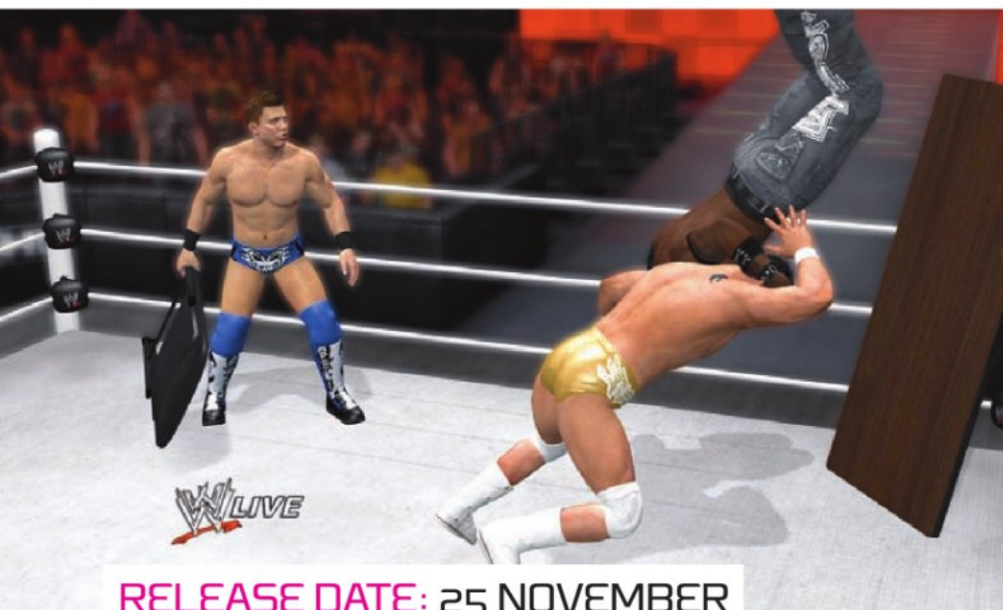


BIGGERER

While there might be claims of *WWE '12* being 'built from the ground up' or some other horrible PR gumph, the fact is it is not. But it is different in a number of ways, with cracks smoothed over rather than the entire thing being stripped down and rebuilt. Animation is a lot smoother and less jerky, while matches themselves have a much quicker flow to them than before. It's elements like these, along with things like interruptible moves (punch Rey Mysterio before he hits the 619, for example) that make for some interesting changes. They're not going to make it a totally brand-new experience, but it looks like they're going to make it a better one.

BADDERER

It's not just about adding 50,000 megatextflops to the sweat physics on the shiny, half-naked men in *WWE* games to make them more realistic. No, it's about other things, too. It's about the ability to target individual limbs as and when you feel like it, meaning you can wear down an arm before applying Alberto Del Rio's armbar finisher. It means you can use 'wake up' taunts, like Randy Orton's 'punch the floor like a mentalist' routine to make the opponent stand up and waddle straight into an RKO. It's about making the ring actually react when someone is slammed on it, rather than remaining entirely static like in *SmackDown Vs Raw 2011*. It all adds up.



RELEASE DATE: 25 NOVEMBER

WWE '12

It's a nip and tuck, not a total rebuild

PS3 Another month has passed and we've had another opportunity to go hands-on with another updated build of *WWE '12* – this time with Long Island Iced Z playable, naturally.

The more time we spend with this reboot of Yuke's long-running series, the

more we start to think it could actually draw us back to the fold. It still has a lot to prove to us and *WWE* games are in the doghouse still (in spite of the impressive *WWE All Stars*), but right now consider us un-nonplussed.

WWE '12 is being developed by Yuke's. Check out www.wwe.thq.com for more details.

BETTERER

There are more legends, DLC additions and apparently one 'big surprise' to be revealed (though he/she may have already been revealed by the time we go to print) when it comes to the roster. But it's already a fairly comprehensive list of past and present superstars and divas, sure to have at least one or two of your favourites available – as well as Sin Cara via DLC. The British contingent is represented through the very pleasant Wade Barrett, the underrated William Regal, the 'Scottish' Drew McIntyre and the absolutely frightening Mason Ryan. So that's all good. Legends like Kevin Nash, Stone Cold and The Rock also make an appearance, so it covers many bases.

PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Asura's Wrath

Set brains to overwhelmed/confused

PS3 Videogames are a bit mental, but obviously not mental enough if *Asura's Wrath* has anything to say about it.

According to this game, we need more people being stabbed through planets if we are ever to evolve as a species. We also need to have a few drinks in a hot springs, stare at the chest of a nearby serving girl and watch a huge stomping Buddha do his huge stompy thing in the background. Going by what *Asura's Wrath* has shown us, at least.

We need to continue our drinking, filling the on-screen burst gauge.



Once the burst gauge is filled – did we mention this was done by the act of drinking? – we clearly need to fight with our master on the Moon, “where no one can get in the way”.

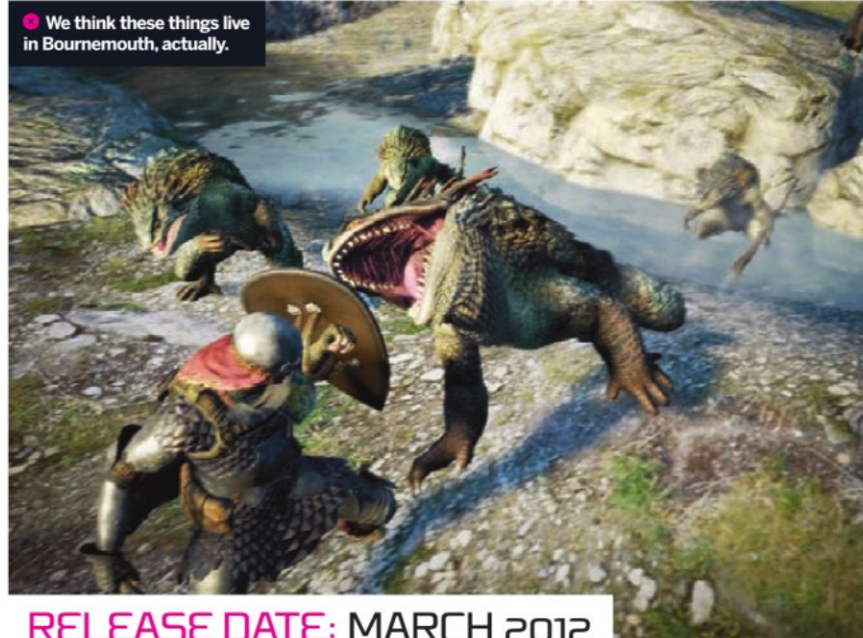
We then need a rather brilliant boss battle involving dodging a lot of lasers and getting close enough in order to hit our master (who we’re fighting on the Moon), and once the fight has progressed enough – well, that’s when we need the opening mentality mentioned: planet-stabbing.

Asura's Wrath is being made by the same folks that made the *Naruto* games, so it’s going to go one of two ways: underrated fun or just a bit pump. Judging by what we’ve seen, we reckon it might end up the former – if even underrated at all.

Asura's Wrath is being developed by CyberConnect2. Check out www.capcom.co.jp/asura for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Planet-stabbing.
- Really, though: he stabs a man through a planet.
- Think of the sheer logistics behind that act.
- To have that kind of power he must bench what – 10,000,000,000kg?



RELEASE DATE: MARCH 2012

Dragon's Dogma

Shadow Of The Oblivion Age Souls

PS3 Our latest look at *Dragon's Dogma* brought Pawns to the fore, and they look to be an interesting addition to what might otherwise have been a pretty ignorable experience. Three of these Pawns – AI companions – can accompany you on adventures in this open-world action adventure game: your main companion and two others.

The main companion differs in how they can be customised, with their clothing, look, fighting style and so on all open for debate. Well, not really debate – you just tell them what to do, wear, look like, whatever. You get the point.

These little beggars who help you out through the game are drawn from a region known as ‘the Rift’. What is ‘the Rift’? Well let’s check our notes: “a weird void where loads of Pawns lie around in wait”. Now you know – and knowing is half the battle. In ‘the Rift’ your main Pawn can be chosen by

other players to take into their own game, with the idea being that they pick up experience and knowledge of the areas they visit from the other player’s game. This is then brought back to your game on their return.

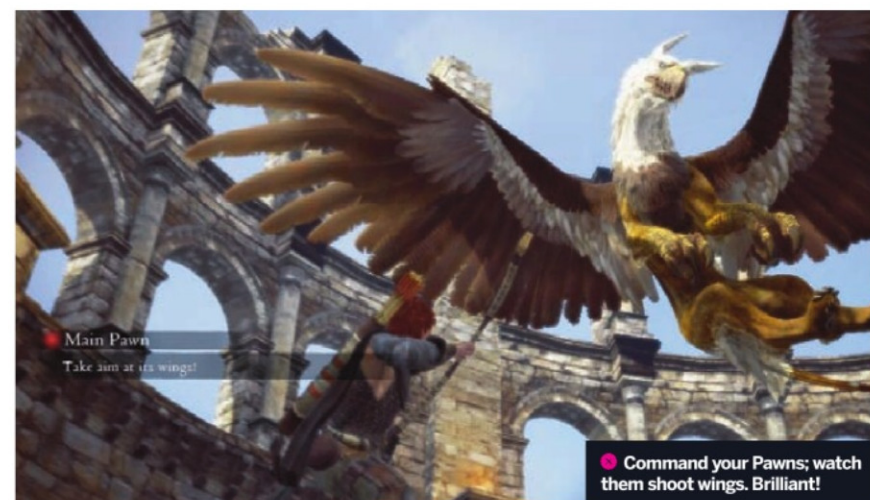
Is it just us or does that sound quite brilliant? Like *GT5*’s B-spec drivers, but with more swords. Anyway, since we found this out we’re now far more likely to keep a closer eye on *Dragon's Dogma*. We’re nice like that.



Dragon's Dogma is being developed by Capcom. Check out www.capcom.co.jp/DD/index.html for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- The pawn system sounds genuinely interesting.
- Let’s hope it doesn’t get PAWNED OFF elsewhere.
- We have been PAWNING (‘fawning’) over the graphics, though.
- Okay, that’s enough PAWNS (‘puns’) now, we promise.



Main Pawn
Take aim at its wings!

Command your Pawns; watch them shoot wings. Brilliant!



RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER

Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3

Now with 1,000% more balancing

PS3 First things first: yes, Capcom has finally rebalanced MVC 3, particularly Phoenix. Now there's none of these super jump-fireball-teleport shenanigans: only one move is possible in the air before players are forced down. Phew.

As for the new characters, Ghost Rider is good at long range, but suffers if anyone closes the distance. *Resident Evil 3*'s Nemesis makes an appearance, wielding his trademark rocket launcher during ultras and also making tentacles manifest from his body for Level 3 supers, which we don't remember seeing in *Resi 3* but hey, we don't remember him fighting Captain America either.

Hawkeye seems like a slightly less good version of Taskmaster, and Strider plays much the same as he does in *Marvel Vs Capcom 2*.

Last but certainly by no means least, Dr Strange more than lives up to his



name. He can fire out globes onto the stage that stay in position. If another projectile of his passes through them, the projectile will gain strength and change direction, making for some truly barmy encounters.

As does his Level 1 Super, which sees him whip out a book and launch opponents into the air via a beam of light. He can also do this to downed opponents, so we look forward to being annoyed by this online. A lot.

Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3 is being developed by Capcom. For more details visit www.marvelvscapcom3.com/us

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's MVC 3.
- Phoenix is nerfed.
- But now it's *Ultimate*.
- And the new characters look great.



RELEASE DATE: TBA 2012

Tekken Hybrid

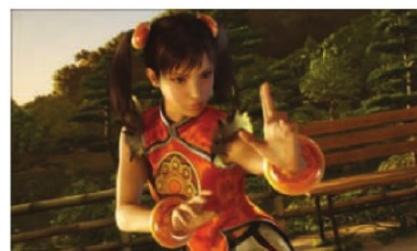
We hope it's not the Prius of fighting games

PS3 Remember: The New Rule of videogames is that everything from last-gen must be remade. *Tekken* is no exception, and so we get *Tekken Hybrid*, which features an HD version of *Tekken Tag*.

As conversions go, it's mixed. There's no rebalancing, nor new moves, and no new art, unless you count redrawn portraits on the character select screen. That said the character models themselves still look quite nice, even if the backgrounds and their associated scrolling might make you think you've had a stroke.

So, it's *Tekken Tag*. You already know if you like it, but to sweeten the deal Namco has thrown in *Tekken Tag Prologue*: a preview of the upcoming *Tekken Tag Tournament 2*. This playable snippet features Nina, Alissa, Devil Jin, Devil Kazuya and Ling Xiaoyu. What you play of *TTT 2* here is just how it'll be in the full game: same engine, same mechanics, so it's a pretty good taster of what's to come.

Also included in the package is the entirety of the *Tekken CGI Blood*



Vengeance, and as a bit of cross-promotion the characters in *TTT Prologue* can also be decked out in the garb they're wearing in the movie. Sadly, this looks more like fan-art than the real thing, but what you gonna do? Not use it? Okay!

Tekken Hybrid is being developed by Namco Bandai. For more information check out Tekken.namco.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's *Tekken Tag*...
- And you get a free movie.
- ...Now in HD!
- And to play *Tekken Tag 2*! Come on people.



PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: TBC

Uncharted: Golden Abyss

How Drake made his Fortune?



Nathan Drake, contrary to popular opinion, is not a nice man. Sure, he's got this whole 'shucks' thing going on, and he wears his T-shirt tucked in like a harmless fratboy douchebag. But he's a killer, a mercenary, a war profiteer. He just has better hair than say, Saddam Hussein.

Which is why we love him, and we're hoping to find out what made him this way in this PSVita prequel, although developer SCE Bend doesn't like us calling it that.

Still, it's not as fussy when we say that *Uncharted: Golden Abyss* is so impressive that it makes a good deal of PS3 games look decidedly shoddy. After Nintendo spectacularly dropped the ball with its sparse and quality-light 3DS launch line-up, *Golden Abyss* fills us with hope that Sony won't make the same mistake.

Get this out at launch and watch the thing fly off the shelves, because this latest entry into the *Uncharted* franchise looks to be a fabulous advert for the new handheld. Those that were concerned (not us, obviously) that Sony was overselling the PSVita's capabilities need worry no more, as everything released so far has been nothing short of absolutely stunning.

Set pre-*Drake's Fortune*, Nate has hooked up with a former convict named Jason Dante, whom Drake has a seemingly long and somewhat tempestuous relationship with – that's generally what happens when someone pulls a gun on you, as Dante does in the latest trailer.

The other newcomer is Marisa Chase, another one of those feisty, attractive women that Drake can't seem to stop meeting. Her grandfather was also an archaeologist, who mysteriously disappeared. Tenner has him turning up at some point.

The three of them are on the hunt for – yes – gold in the deep valleys of Central America, which means in true *Uncharted* style you'll soon be navigating lush jungles, roaring rivers and ancient temples. SCE Bend is boasting of the ridiculous power under the hood of the Vita that enables it to get the game to look as impressive as it is: dynamic lighting makes for excellent real-time shadows (essential for getting the atmosphere right) and the water effects are *ridiculous*. And yes, Drake's shirt will even get wet the same way it does on PS3.

As ever, though, it's not just the graphics being technically 'good'

that gives *Uncharted* its trademark aesthetic: it's good art direction as well, and the PSVita has the power to deliver both with ease. In fact, although it's not too difficult to tell the difference between the PS3 and PSVita games, there are plenty of moments when *Uncharted: Golden Abyss* looks like it could have been lifted straight out of its bigger brother's instalments.

Sony is keen to tell everyone who'll listen, however, how this *Uncharted* is only possible on Vita, and looking at the extensive suite of control options we'll have to agree. *Golden Abyss* takes full advantage of every input that Vita boasts, from touch screens to Sixaxis-alike tilt controls.

For example, both hand-to-hand and firearms-based combat can now be controlled via the touch screen, with Drake's takedowns performed by tapping an enemy in range. Guns too can be picked up via this method, sniper rifles are aimed by using the tilt functionality, and grenades can be 'thrown' by touching where you want them to land.

It's interesting, but we don't think we'll be using a lot of those methods, with the sniper example sounding particularly annoying.

For us, the biggest change the PSVita will bring to the *Uncharted* gameplay is reflected in the new platforming mechanics.

Now guiding Drake from handhold to handhold is as easy as 'drawing' the path with your finger. You can also use the tilt functionality to make Drake jump between ledges: simply lean the Vita in the direction you want to go and tap the screen and Nate will make his move.

While some are more successfully implemented than others, purists should be satisfied to know that all of this functionality seems totally optional. Don't want to use the touch screen, accelerometer or rear touchpad? Then don't. It's up to you. We're not big fans of developers shoehorning in these types of interfaces just to show off the hardware, but SCE Bend seems to know what it's doing.

Sounds good, right? Yup. We're almost dangerously excited for this here at **Play**: Ian sometimes comes into the office in the morning saying that he's not been able to sleep because it's not out yet.

While the rest of the team aren't *that* mental, there's no denying that *Uncharted: Golden Abyss* looks to be a sterling addition to the franchise and a great coup for Sony's PSVita line-up.

Uncharted: Golden Abyss is being developed by SCE Bend. Check out www.bendgamestudio.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



It's *Uncharted*.



It looks like *Uncharted*.



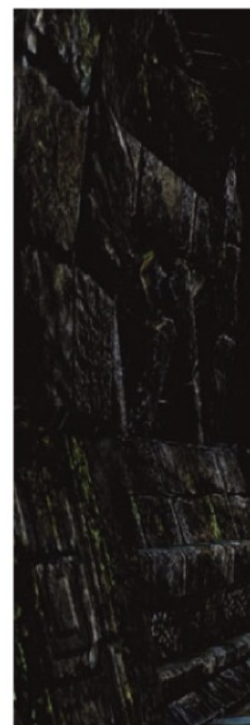
It sounds like *Uncharted*.



It is *Uncharted*!

READ ME

SCE Bend is probably most famous for developing the *Syphon Filter* games.



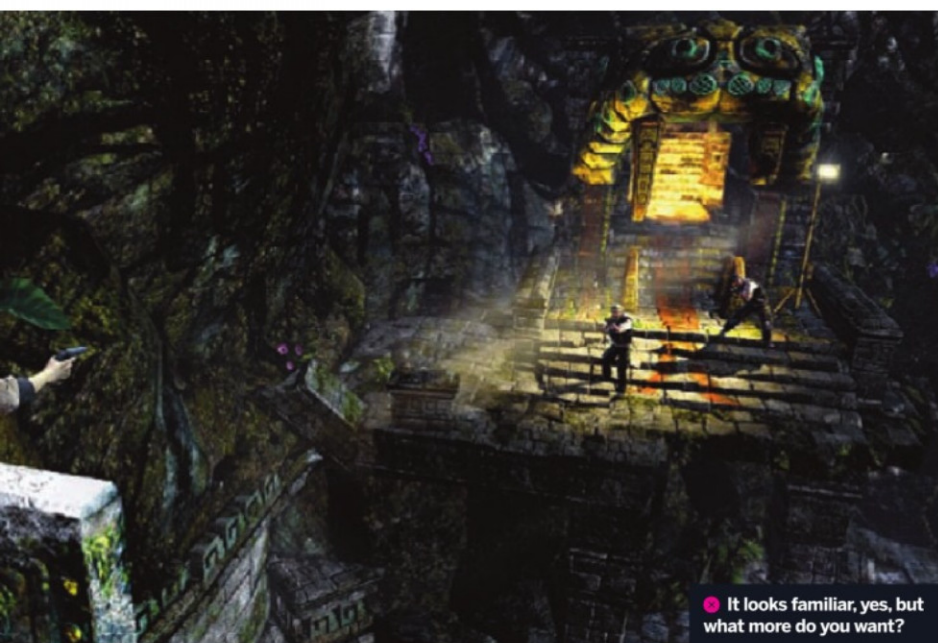
UPDATE



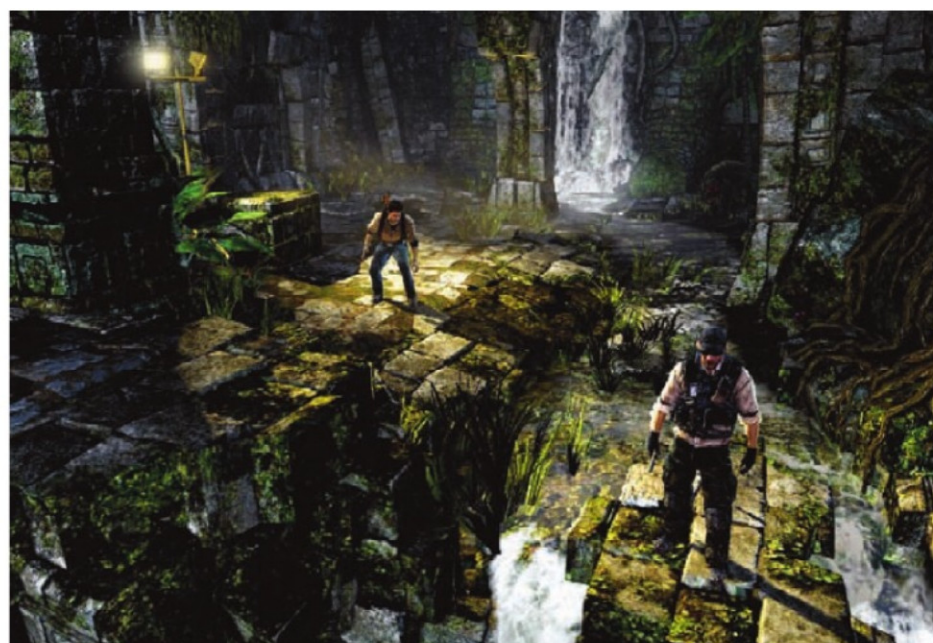
● The lighting effects are wonderful, don't you agree?



● This is Marisa Chase. If she's not a new love interest we'll eat our own brains.



● It looks familiar, yes, but what more do you want?



● Drake's health insurance must be outrageous.



DRAKE'S CLIMBDOWN

Uncharted's hero is more athletic than ever

AS EXPECTED, UNCHARTED is going to be showing off PSVita's many interfaces and control schemes in a big way. We're not completely sold on all of them, but there's no denying that simply being able to tap an enemy to take them down or tilt to jump to a ledge will appeal to those that aren't die-hard shooter or action game fans.

Best of all, however, it's all completely optional, not that it'll stop everyone from moaning. If you've played *Uncharted* before, don't worry: nothing's changing. If not, then feel free to rub the back of your PSVita as much as you want. Err...



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

It's not 'as good as PS3', but it's still nice.

Resistance: Burning Skies

We're going to resist any Resistance puns here... oops



An FPS? On a handheld? Oof.
But wait!

But why?

For you see, the addition of an extra analogue stick on PSVita means we will be able to control the game properly, without relying on fiddly face buttons to navigate the alien-infested world of alterno-past.

Alterno-wha?

It's another *Resistance* game, douche-face.

Oh. So what's going on? Capelli?

Hale? Some other generi-dude?

Option C, my good chum. Players play playfully with new protagonist Tom Riley as he axes, grenades and shoots his way through the Chimera invasion we all know and love so very much. It's been described as 'the story of a single man'. So of course, being the

Pulitzer-prize-winning journalists that we are (possible lie), we asked if this rules out co-op. This got the usual 'we're not talking about that just yet' response. Ooooh. Intrigue.

Sounds simply wonderful!

It won't be anything particularly unique, but at the same time it's the first twin-stick-controlled FPS for a Sony handheld we're ever seeing, and it includes a few touch-screen controls to boot.

TOUCH SCREEN?!

Well, yes. It's for Vita, so they're going to cram that stuff in. Grenades are thrown by tracing the direction you want to lob them in, basically. You can also use alternate fire on different weapons by tapping the screen. It's a feature both necessary for inclusion on a flagship title of a new handheld and implemented well enough, but also with a hint of 'checklist' to the whole thing.

Any word on the other Vita-specific control nuggets?

First, 'control nuggets' sounds disgusting. B, we haven't heard much beyond touch-screen integration. Tilt mechanics will also be used to peek over cover, which makes sense in a roundabout way, but we doubt the cameras would be used for anything other than the gimmicky picking up weapons by waving your hand thing. Unless there is indeed multiplayer and avatars could be made of player faces, or something.

What a zany idea!

We stole it from *WipEout 2048*. Sorry *WipEout*.

So should we all be confident of a big super-winner FPS for Vita?

It's too early to say, and Nihilistic's track record does work against *Burning Skies*. We're not being mean, it's just the way things are.



All the same, *Resistance 3* proved our initial doubts wrong, it's a new console so we'll have the additional buzz to go with it and how bad can an FPS really be?

Rogue Warrior.

Thanks for reminding us of that. Many sleepless nights ahead – it helps avoid the nightmares that come with that piece of shi-

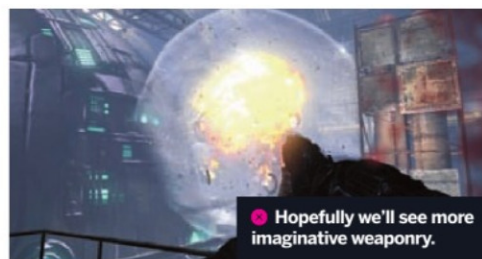
Resistance: Burning Skies is being developed by Nihilistic Software. Check out <http://bit.ly/qQuiU0> for a few more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Resistance 3 surprised us with its goodness, so more is welcome.
- Nihilistic has a history of making games rated less than 74% on Metacritic.
- Twin-stick FPS controls! On a handheld! IT'S A MIRACLE.
- Oh no... wait.

READ ME

Insomniac Games, creator of the *Resistance* series, has said it's open to leaving the series in the hands of other developers. Like this then, really.



Hopefully we'll see more imaginative weaponry.

LIFE OF RILEY

That pun is going to be so overused

BURNING SKIES IS set in 1951, the same year as the first game, and sees players taking on the role of Tom Riley – New York firefighter and so man who is handy with axes and doors. No word yet if we'll be seeing *The Firemen*-style antics at any point in the game. Unrelated: we would like to see *The Firemen* remade.

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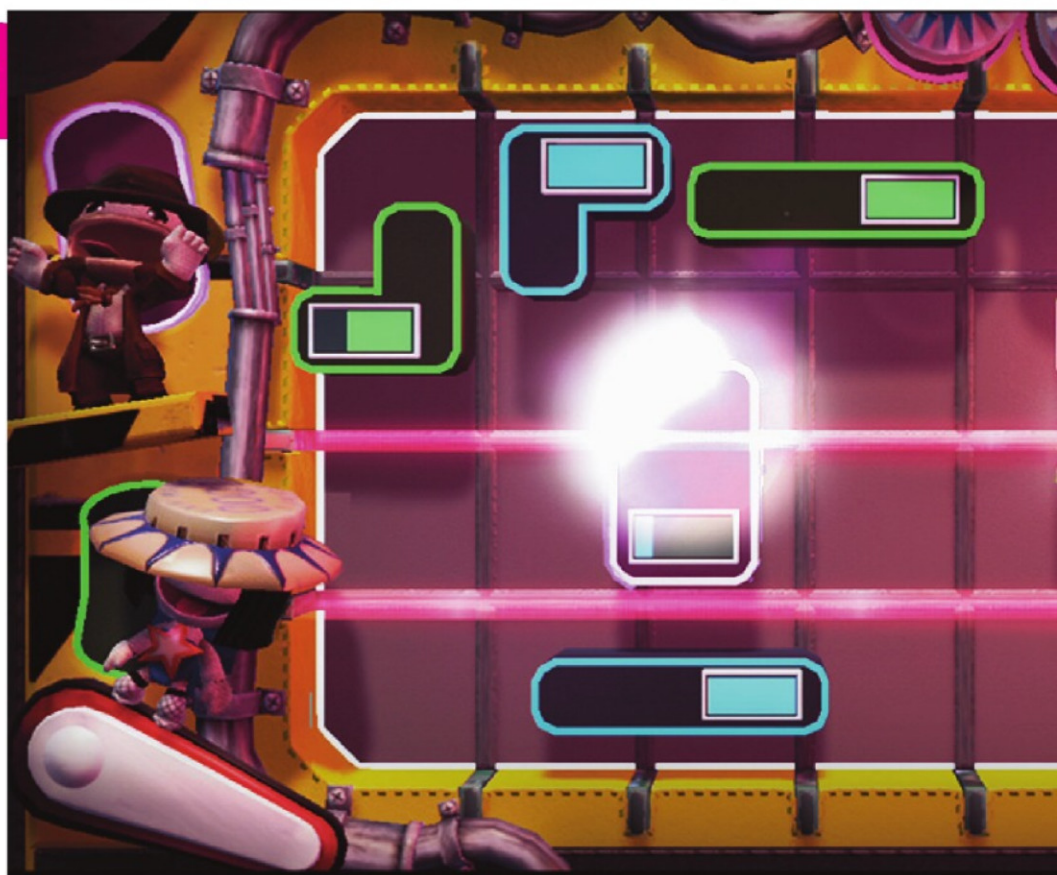
SHARE. SHARE. SHARE.

It's both unsurprising and obvious to point out that *LittleBigPlanet* is a series that relies on sharing. Unfortunately, thanks to the online infrastructure being a bit pooppy, *LBP* on PSP wasn't as great as it could have been. Step forward the future, then, which brings with it faster internets and the potential for 3G coverage allowing downloads and uploads wherever you are in the world. Though those roaming data charges can be a bitch – £7.50 a megabyte? Nevertheless, any steps – be they through the game or through the technology the game runs on – that make it easier to share your creations with others is a very brilliant thing indeed.

SIMPLICITY IS KEY

We reckon Double Eleven probably could have made *LBP Vita* to the same sort of specifications as *LBP 2*, but just think how overwhelming and *large* that would be for a handheld game. We're all for unlimited mega-content, but there comes a point when you just want to make a few levels while sat on the bus/train/hover-coach, not innovate an entire new genre. As such, simplicity is *LBP Vita*'s friend. Without it it might get mired down in trying to be something it simply could not effectively do – and after all, we've already got *LBP 2* at home. We'd say one version of that is enough to last us a lifetime. Until *LBP 3*, obviously.

2



3

RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

LittleBigPlanet

We need to reuse some LBP PSP puns here...



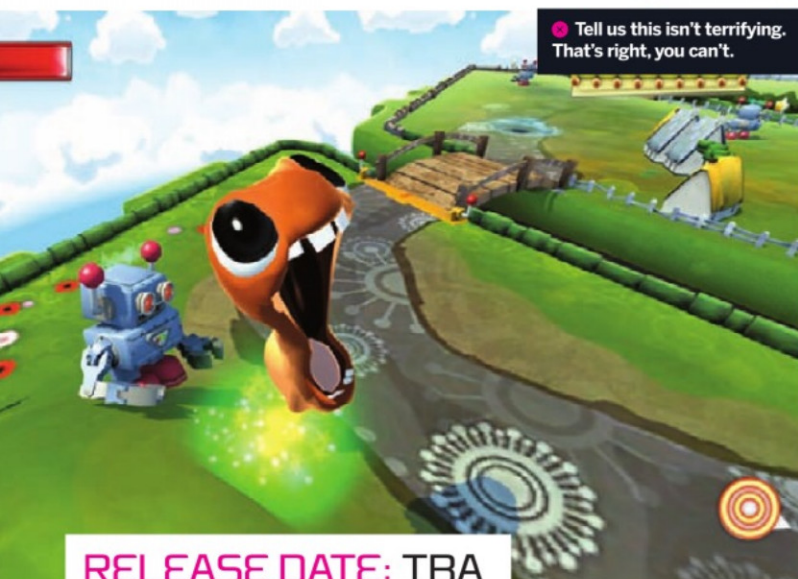
It is now at the point where it wouldn't be a Sony device without a *LittleBigPlanet* game. It also wouldn't be a *LittleBigPlanet* game if it wasn't for creation tools. And multiplayer. And touch screen. Oh wait, no – that's a new one. Basically we're just trying to get at the

fact that this is a new *LittleBigPlanet* game, and it's for PSVita, and it has all the things that make *LBP LBP*. And it has touch-screen stuff. That's all.

LittleBigPlanet is being excitedly developed by Double Eleven Limited. Check out www.littlebigplanet.com for more details.

PSV CONTROL SCHEMES

Touch screen comes into play in a few ways, from direct manipulation of objects on levels – creating platforms by moving blocks, or creating gaps to move through by doing the same – through using the camera to take pictures you can then directly import to the Create mode. Then there's using the touch screen (again) to play a piano in order to progress (not just to show off) and surprisingly well-implemented tilt controls to help Sackboy swing on whatever it is he's swinging on. It feels like the unique Vita features might well be used in interesting ways, though there's always the risk they might feel a bit crammed in. Hopefully not though, obviously.



RELEASE DATE: TBA

Little Deviants

Rolling, just keep rolling...

PSV Every new console needs a good tech demo so that it can show off the hardware that's going to set it apart from its competitors. A game that's not too taxing while still being challenging, not too realistic while still feeling authentic. A game that can appeal to everyone, while showing the hardcore just what the hardware can do.

Every platform holder needs its own *Wii Sports*, essentially, and *Little Deviants* looks like it's going to be exactly that for Sony and the Vita. A collection of mini-games essentially, developer Bigbig Studios has gone to town on shoehorning the Vita's various different technological marvels into one game. The core gameplay is generally the same: complete a task to get the titular Deviants to their goal. The execution, however, is wildly different.

In one you'll be using the microphone to complete a singing challenge. Another sees players using the rear touch pad to raise terrain on screen to roll a Deviant to his goal, *Katamari*-style.

Gyroscopic controls can be used to guide a Deviant around a hazard-filled cave, and the front touch screen can be pinched to pull Deviants back and slingshot them forward.

PSVita's cameras also get a run-out as well, with an alternate reality game tasking players with blasting aliens as they fly around various real-world environments.

It's all fairly basic stuff in truth – there's no moment in *Little Deviants* so far where you're sure you're looking at the future of videogaming or anything – but then that's exactly what the game needs to be.

It looks like a tech demo, certainly, but we like what we've seen of *Little Deviants* so far. If it's accessible enough to appeal to your gran while also being deep enough so core gamers won't tire of its gimmicks in ten minutes flat then Sony and Bigbig Studios could be onto a winner.

Bigbig also developed the *Pursuit Force* series and *MotorStorm: Arctic Edge*, both on PSP. Check out www.bigbigstudios.com for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Touch!
- Singing!
- Rear-touch!
- Alternate reality!

READ ME

An SCE-published mini-game compendium that aims to show off the PSVita's grunt. Oh, and you can sing to it. So that's something.



COMPETITIVE DEVIANCY

Instant updates let you know when you've lost your crown
LITTLE DEVIANTS' MINI-GAMES are perfectly suited to competitive play, and Bigbig Studios has introduced some nice online functionality to complement this. Should any of your PSN friends wish to challenge you to a game you can simply tap the screen to go straight to the level in question. Win or lose, your progress will be filtered into the 'News Cloud' for all your friends to see/laugh at.



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Creating levels also involves creating music. As such, you aren't expected to make said tunes without help. The level creator comes with a sequencer overlay to allow you to get your timings and note positioning correct. What this means is that even tone-deaf morons (hello!) should be able to produce something half-decent.

WHEN? WHERE? WHY? HOW?

It's still up in the air how much *Sound Shapes* will set you back, as well as whether or not it will be a retail release. While we're all for the idea of it being a full-on shoppified release, we can't help but think it would be far more suitable for a PSN-only route.

COMPERTISHIYUN

While we find it easy to imagine a world where the philistines known as the general public simply ignore *Sound Shapes*, it's certainly not a bad thing that the game is so unique. There's nothing else like it coming to Vita, and there's little else like it in the world of gaming as a whole.

HEY GOOD LOOKIN'

Sound Shapes has, at last count, around five graphics in the whole game. Unfortunately it has no three dees, but we can live without them. This many graphics means it's an interesting-looking title and one that's sure to inflate the underpants of many arty types desperate to find an understated, retro-looking game.



RELEASE DATE: TBC 2012

Sound Shapes

Now with added sound (also: shapes)



We told you, months ago, that *Sound Shapes* looks to be one of Vita's most promising titles releasing alongside the new handheld. Turns out people in the Rest Of The World are slow to catch on to these things – but they have caught on. The buzz is building. The number of words written on *Sound Shapes* (now sans 'Project', it seems) is ever-increasing. And our excitement for the game shows no signs of abating.

For those who haven't been paying absolute, total and constant attention to our words on the game (shame on you): *Sound Shapes* is what is described as a 'music platformer'. Now while this may sound prattish, it actually does a decent job of describing what the hell it's all about. Controlling a little circular... thing... with octopus-like tentacles on it that allow it to stick to certain surfaces, players must simply navigate levels and reach the end point. Obviously there's room for skill here, with avoidance of

enemies and traps standing hand in hand with environmental obstacles we've all come to know and love in gaming. Sounds pretty standard, no doubt.

But then you layer on the additional factors – like how the collectables picked up in each level add different layers of sound to the background music. The more you get, the closer to a full tune it sounds. Then there's the fact that all of the levels in the game are created using a specific editing tool, and that tool is included with the game for everyone to use. Levels can be created, modified, uploaded for others and downloaded to play (or 'remix', if you want). The fact that Queasy Games is considering YouTube and MP3 export options for user creations just shows how good this stuff can be, and we're still excited about *Sound Shapes*.

Sound Shapes is being developed by Queasy Games. Check out <http://twitter.com/#!/soundshapes> for more details.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It uses Vita's features in a fashion that doesn't feel forced.
- Everyone likes independent developers, right?
- The Play, Create, Share philosophy is always something to embrace.
- We're just really quite enamoured with it. Hopefully it won't let us down.

READ ME

Queasy Games' last title was the rather overlooked *Everyday Shooter*. 'Twas an interesting concept in the rather stale twin-stick genre, and is still worth a download from the PS Store.

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PLAY Reviews 点検

Playing bad games so you don't have to

Including: Resistance 3 proves that third time's the charm /// Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD is still brilliant /// PES 2012 steps up to the spot...

74 Resistance 3

It's better than we imagined

on review

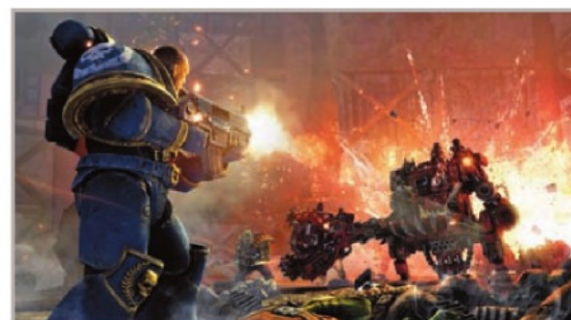
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- 96 Champion Jockey PS3



84 Dead Island PS3
Knives, guns and lots of zombies



88 Bodycount PS3
Most boring, average game on PS3?



94 Warhammer: Space Marine PS3
Or maybe this deserves that award

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RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Resistance 3

Note to Halo 3: this is how you end a trilogy



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
Insomniac Games
Price
£39.99
Players
1-16
Genre
FPS
Age Rating
18
Website
insomniacgames.com/games/resistance3
Twitter
@insomniacgames
Facebook
facebook.com/insomniacgames

PS3 Finally, a *Resistance* game that lives up to all of the promise that Insomniac hinted at in previous games but never quite delivered. *Resistance: Fall Of Man* couldn't have been more on-rails if it was an attraction at Alton Towers, and *Resistance 2* was high on bombast and low on engagement. *Resistance 3* is thankfully neither: instead, it's a carefully designed, well-paced shooter that actually takes advantage of its mythology to create one of the best FPSs on PlayStation 3.

Finally, a *Resistance* game that lives up to all of the promise that Insomniac hinted at

Resistance 3 has a sombre, end-of-the-world tone that shapes both story and gameplay. With Nathan Hale dead and the US government destroyed, *Resistance 3* revels in showing us the true cost of Earth's conflict with the occupying Chimera. There aren't any super-soldier death squads to save the day here, and very little in the way of jingoism, patriotism, or even hope. The war is over. Mankind is on its piss-soaked knees, eking out a living in small communities and hovels while the Chimera spends its days hunting them down.



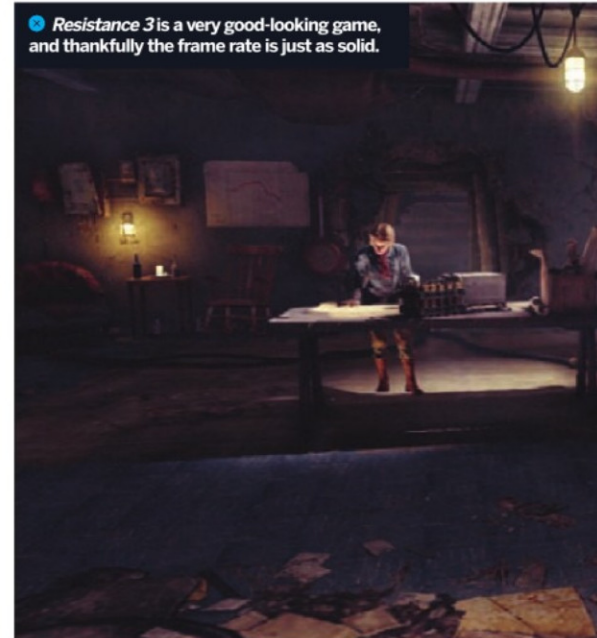
Here's Joe's wife Susan, looking both suspiciously well groomed and just suspicious.

Make no mistake, *Resistance 3* is a bleak game. The previous entries were hardly rainbow-coloured odes to joy, but here things take such a downward turn that it's surprising everyone hasn't killed themselves yet.

As you fight through the eerily atmospheric re-creation of what's left of civilisation – from hicksville in Haven, Oklahoma to big-city New York for one last weary tilt at the Chimera power structure – conversations are frequently observed and overheard, in a nod to *Half-Life*'s narrative structure. As expected, it's not uplifting stuff – one is regarding whether keeping an unborn child is wise, given the rampant food shortage, and another details a recently widowed mother-to-be leave voice messages heavily implying that she'll kill herself and her unborn kid. All hope is lost, and direct confrontation has been abandoned in favour of guerrilla-style operations, and those only when provoked first.

Which is why *Resistance 3* is such a fine experience, finally welding the series' innovative dual-function weapons to a scenario that

Resistance 3 is a very good-looking game, and thankfully the frame rate is just as solid.



actually invokes a response other than 'woah, that's a big alien'. *Resistance 2*'s Joe Capelli (who apparently has morphed into *Mad Men*'s Don Draper) has been bumped from supporting character to lead here, and his lo-fi way of life is a far cry from the tired, gung-ho secret military bases of yore. After years of killing, he's tired, scarred, scared and, worst of all, he's got a wife and young son to contend with.

If this all sounds a bit serious, then don't worry: Insomniac hasn't turned its franchise into *War And Peace* or anything. All it means is that when the action does kick off – and it's not long – *Resistance 3* feels like a different beast to its predecessors, retaining the spectacle while adding a story we care about.

As stated, one aspect where it doesn't deviate too much from the previous instalments is the weapons, which have always been inventive and novel and continue to be so here.



FAMILY MAN

Insomniac's obviously been watching too much television...

LISTEN, WE ALL love Don Draper. *Mad Men*'s enigmatic bastard has made a superstar of actor John Hamm, and inspired a nation of impressionable idiots to wear suits when they don't need to, us included.

As everyone and their dog has noticed, Capelli seems to have morphed into Don between *Resistance 2* and *Resistance 3*, so much so that it becomes massively distracting during the cut-scenes. We keep expecting him to whip out a cigarette and start explaining his new advertising campaign to the Chimera forces.

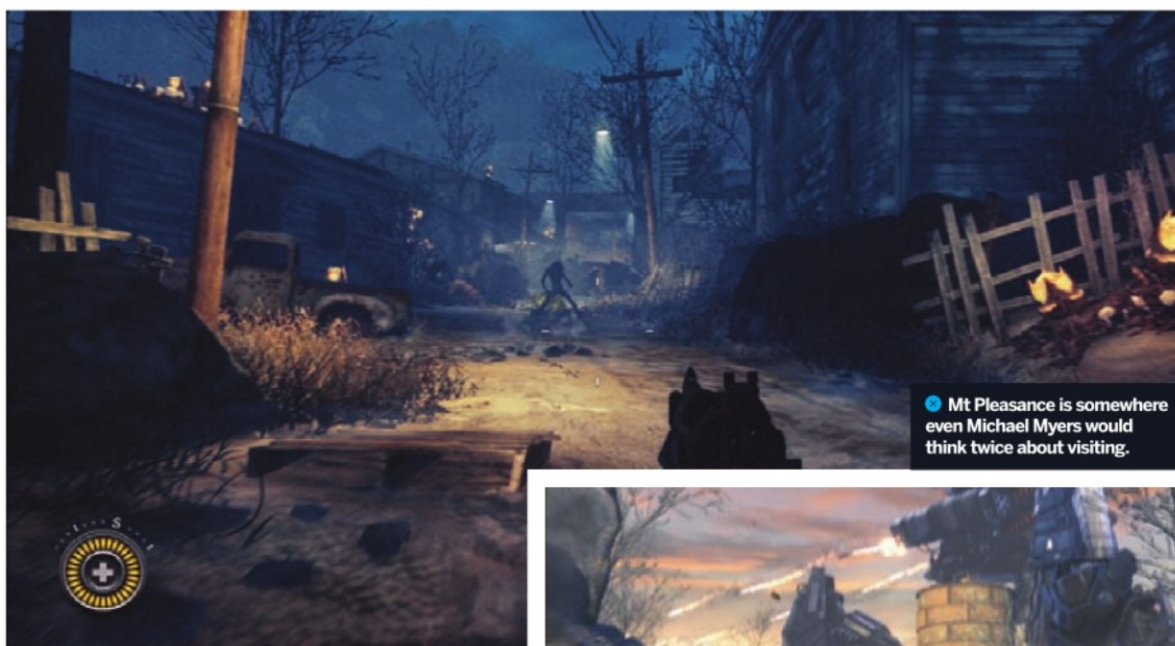
Still, while the borrowing of Hamm's face is a slight irritant, it's far more palatable than looking at yet another bald space marine. Seriously, if we see any more of those we're going to do ourselves and the developers some serious damage (NOTICE TO LEGAL TYPES: NOT TRUE).

In this series



Resistance 2 Issue 173

We gave this 90%, but times have changed and, despite the lower score, *Resistance 3* is a better game. **90%**



Some old favourites have slipped through the net – there's no LAARK, and the slice-and-dice fun of the V7 is long gone.

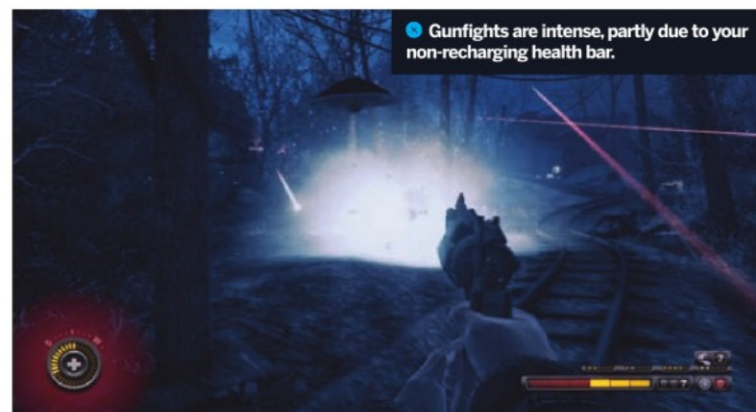
Not that it matters much: *Resistance 3*'s list of guns is still varied and moreover they're extremely well balanced. Additions such as the Cryogun are especially fun to use, freezing enemies before shattering them, and melee weapons like the Sledgehammer reinforce the vicious nature of the game. Out of *Resistance 3*'s 12 weapons, all have a distinct use and purpose, and we never felt like we were carrying around a redundant weapon. Likewise, there's no relying on just one overpowered gun to get you through.

Crucially, *Resistance 3*'s guns are fun to use because the levels are varied, well designed and interesting, both in terms of how they look and how it feels to play through them. The key failing of *Resistance: Fall Of Man* was that its

skirmishes were taking place in nothing more than well-disguised corridors: you may have been fighting in the middle of what appeared to be an open battlefield, but you couldn't get off the rails: waist-high fences were simply too much for the saviour of humanity. No wonder the Chimera won.

Here, however, the battlefields are open-ended, with a variety of different waypoints and overwatch positions to catch your enemies out with. There's a genuine feeling of waging war against a far greater force in *Resistance 3*'s play: you'll often find yourself attempting to even the odds by adeptly using the environment, ambushing Chimera forces and using their own tech against them.

Which isn't to say that Insomniac has abandoned the gigantic battles of before: there's still Chimera forces pouring in from absolutely everywhere, and you'll still be >



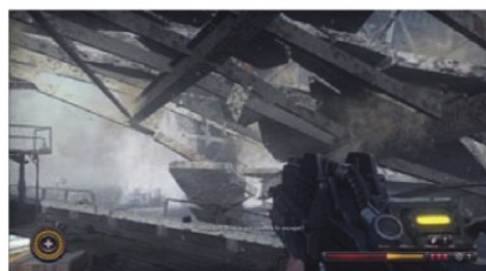
> engaging in over-the-top, end-of-the-world shoot-outs. They're just dished out in a cleverer way, with the player not being overwhelmed or overexposed to fighting a gigantic enemy, the game building up to these encounters wisely. You'll have to use *all* of your weapons and ingenuity, cooking up strategies on the fly and generally engaging with the setting and gameplay far more than ever happened in the first two instalments.

Overall, pacing is one of *Resistance 3*'s strongest points, and it alternates between moments of both quiet reflection and bombastic noise with ease – again, helped by the desperate narrative and setting.

Speaking of settings, *Resistance 3*'s plot (which sees the actually-not-dead scientist Malikov and Capelli blaze a trail across the States to New York) afforded the developer the opportunity to experiment visually, and it doesn't disappoint: as expected there's a wealth of difference between the snow-covered skyline of New York, the dark and foreboding cabins of Mt Pleasant, Pennsylvania and the autumnal leaves of Haven, Oklahoma. It's always interesting to see where you'll end up next.

Surprising, too, as *Resistance 3* features two key gear changes that show how much attention Insomniac has paid to pacing and atmosphere. The first sees Capelli and Malikov (the man of science, remember) hiding out with a community of devout Christians. The community refuses to leave its ground, with pastor's wife Jean saying that God has granted them this land and it is theirs to defend.

Unfortunately the town is absolutely overrun with different Chimera types, the worst being a huge beast that lives in the mines below. The community has dubbed it 'Satan,' and it's up to Capelli and the local Father to kill it.



As in *Half-Life 2*'s Ravenholm level, Mt Pleasant plays more like a survival-horror game than an FPS, with dingy, dilapidated shacks concealing waiting 'Grims' (weak yet fast zombified former humans), and there's

Resistance 3 feels like a different beast to its predecessors, retaining the spectacle while adding a story we care about

the general feeling you're being watched at all times. The mines themselves take this one step further, drastically reducing the volume of common enemies – and therefore cranking up the tension – as you creep around the subterranean lair of the gigantic Chimera that has been terrorising the townsfolk.

The second example sees (MEGA SPOILER) Malikov killed – via decapitation – and Capelli captured by the 'Wardens' – crazed humans led

by an ex-Sentinel called Mick. The Wardens are former inmates: psychotics who kill for sport and operate a pit-fighting operation out of the prison that used to house them. With nothing but a sledgehammer to aid him at first, Capelli

must battle captured Chimera and then the Wardens in the sort of brutal melee combat that *Condemned 2* would be proud of,

before escaping the facility (END SPOILER).

Both instances are clever changes of pace, expertly breaking up the standard combat while also attempting to get players to brood for a while on the differences not just between the Chimera and man but also between man's different ideologies. It doesn't force it down your throat, thankfully – there's no big *Independence Day*-style speech here – but they're worthy additions nonetheless.

Inevitably, there are elements of the game that don't quite stack up against everything else the game does right. While the setting and overarching narrative itself is fine, there's some moments of the story that want to be profound and earnest and just end up coming off as schmalzy. Capelli constantly (and obviously) thumbing his son's mitten is one such example. Another is when Joe nearly gets himself killed by diving after said mitten after he drops it – and ends up falling out of a helicopter. Good call.

Likewise, your supporting characters aren't very memorable or interesting: there's mad scientist Malikov, mad Texan Charlie, mad-haired Herbert and mad bastard Mick. Apart from Malikov, there's very little reason given to these characters' motivations. While we know it's not essential to a shooter, these are meant to be the last people on Earth: we'd like to know a little bit about them.

Also, for those looking for *Resistance 3* to tie the series up in a nice neat bow, disappointment awaits. We prefer it this way, but for those that

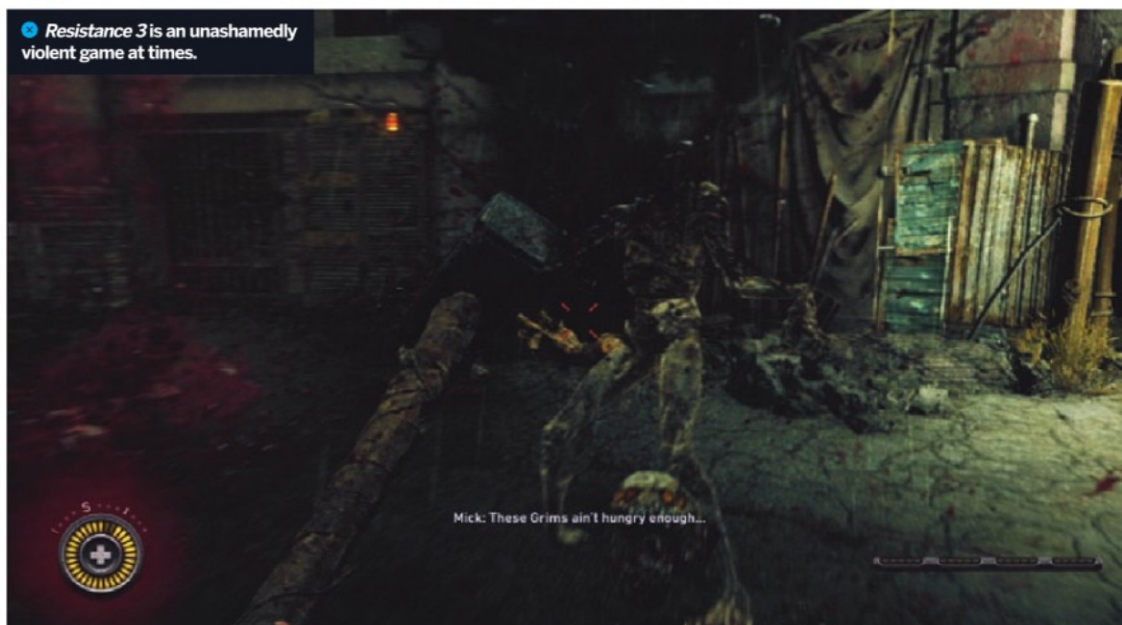




Here's Mick. Looks like a nice chap, eh? (Hint: He's not).



Resistance 3 is an unashamedly violent game at times.



HEALTH PACKS? WHAT YEAR IS THIS?

Resistance 3 gets back to FPS staples

LIKE RESISTANCE: *Fall Of Man*, *Resistance 3* features health packs. Yes, health packs, those things that used to keep you alive in shooters before *Halo* ruined everything. Anyway, it's actually a good call: getting away from the immersion-breaking noise it makes when you pick one up, it actually heightens the tension, as you can't just hide behind some boxes and magically get better any more.

It's not all back to basics, however, as Insomniac has introduced a new levelling system for your weapons. It's not complicated: simply using a weapon for a certain amount of time upgrades it to the second and third tiers, where it'll get a nice buff. For example, the Bullseye when fully levelled fires an exploding tag that can also attach to two other enemies.



wanted to see Capelli punch an alien queen right in the ovaries be aware that *Resistance 3* seems to make nods to new storylines and plot threads for the inevitable sequel.

The Chimera, too, have their problems. While overall the AI is pretty good, and moments of laugh-inducing stupidity are rare (although one where we were sniping while crouched right *next* to a sniper still makes us crack up) by the end of the game you may well have found that the joy of killing them has dulled a little, especially seeing as the (spoiler) alien tower levels are dull and overlong and your foes generally aren't all that different to each other.

But these are annoyances. *Resistance 3* is far closer in both tone and action to the game that we thought the previous instalments would

be, and there's plenty to admire here. Throw in a co-op mode that enables you and a friend to play through the whole campaign together (there's no separate co-op mode, though) and competitive multiplayer and you've finally got a *Resistance* experience worth buying into.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

Don't go into it expecting anything truly revolutionary and you'll be pleasantly surprised by just how accomplished *Resistance 3* is. The series has come a long way since *Fall Of Man* made its debut in 2007, and the third instalment is the best yet.

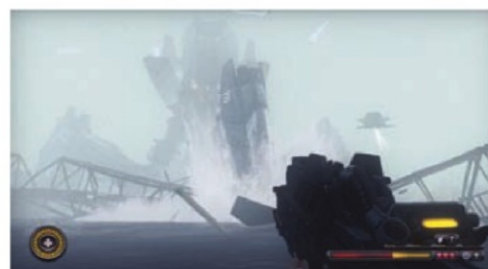
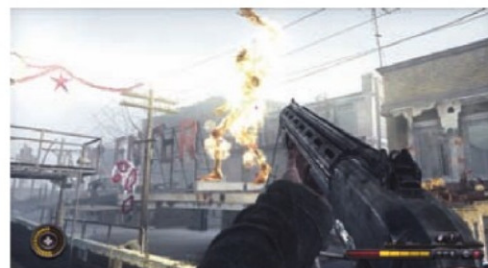
88%

Previously...
in Play



PREVIEWED Issue 209

"It ticks all the boxes" is what we said in issue 209, and thankfully it goes even further than that.





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Genuinely – it's panic-inducing.

Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD

ENGAGE GUSH MODE. GUSH MODE ENGAGED



It's second-chance saloon time – not quite as drastic as last-chance saloon, true, but no less momentous an occasion. For you see, we've all been given a second chance to play two of the best games that ever came out on PS2. And this particular second chance includes a fine HD refurbishment with some extra 3D slathered on top for good measure – so not only is it worth stopping by this second-chance saloon, it's probably worth dropping in even if you took it up on the offer first time around. This metaphor has gone weird, we know. Safe to say, *Ico* and *Shadow Of The Colossus* are still brilliant games to play, even being nine and six years old, respectively. To see them given a shiny new veneer and re-released as a poor person-friendly double pack just ratchets them up from 'essential' to 'whatever the rank above essential' is. But why? Let's try and explain, using as little flowery and pretentious language as possible.

Ico is the experience of a haunting, languid world of tranquility and beauty. But it is a world harbouring a vicious dichotomy – an unnerving other side consisting of malevolence, threat, peril and... oh, we've failed on the non-flowery, non-pretentious route. Darn.

Take our money,
Sony. Take it now

Try again: *Ico* tells a simple story of a horned boy, imprisoned as a result of his head ornaments and left for dead. He escapes, he meets a ghostlike girl and forms a bond with her, before attempting to escape their castle confines. That's about it for setup, really. No 54-minute cut-scenes where every element of the story is carefully taken apart by unskillful exposition and laid out on a plate for the player, who is – naturally – being treated as if they were dumber than the child they play the game as. No, this is a story that plays out more in the mind of the user than on screen, with a melancholic yarn backed up by your mind's ability to fill in the gaps.

The most important aspect of *Ico* is – both to story and to the game itself – the companionship mechanic that exists between the titular player character and his charge, Yorda. The two don't understand each other, so communication is limited to noises, gestures and by the boy grabbing the girl's hand and dragging her around. Yorda is actually necessary to open doors throughout the game, but the sense of protection the player develops for her is something never once forced, never dwelt upon. Instead Team Ico took the grand decision of making black shadow bastards come up out of the ground and try to kidnap



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
Team Ico/Bluepoint Games
Price
£34.99
Players
1
Genre
Action adventure
Age Rating
12
Website
<http://bit.ly/eheUM3>
Twitter
@PlayStation
Facebook
www.facebook.com/Sony

the girl. Lose her and it's game over – simple as – and this one, constant threat that could come from anywhere, at any time, makes what is a simple, engaging puzzle platformer into one of the most tense and on-edge experiences in gaming. No, really. Try not to shout at your TV when you see Yorda being carried away by an ethereal shadow-beast. Try not to feel the intense relief when you literally drag her out of the hole she almost disappeared into. Similarly, try not to lurch your body to the side, as if to give yourself more purchase when catching Yorda as she leaps across a chasm. It's still genuinely surprising how affecting the game can be, especially considering its minimalist overtones (or should that be undertones?).

Okay, so sometimes the controls feel a bit unresponsive to your button-jabs and yes, it can – *sometimes* – control in quite a clumsy fashion. There could also be complaints about its length, with competent players likely to clock in times under the five-hour mark. At the same time, it doesn't feel anywhere near as old-fashioned as we expected it to, or as decidedly crusty as we thought a game from 2002 would feel, *plus* it actually feels like the perfect length. Just goes to show how ahead of its time and how utterly different *Ico* was and still is, as well as the influence it's had on other games over the years. >

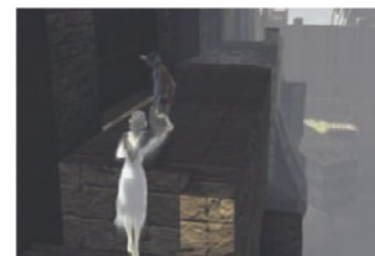


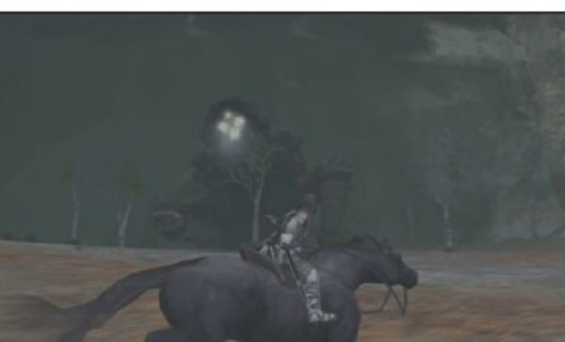


MATCH.COM

Because two's (good) company

IT'S FUNNY TO re-play both of these games and see just how effective they are at making you form a bond with your compatriot for each respective title. A lack of communication is present through both duos, but an understanding and awareness forms regardless. When Yorda is stolen away, you panic and try your damndest to get her back. When Agro gallops over to rescue you from the wrath of an angry mountain, you feel genuine relief. Current titles rely a great deal on showing you who you should care about and trying to force the player to bond – *Ico* and *SOTC* show it doesn't have to be like that, nor should it be.





> But what about the HD sheen we GLOSSED OVER (ha ha ha! HAAAA) earlier? Well this is a flagship high-def re-release for Sony, and it shows. *Ico* looks genuinely very good considering its age, and graphically it translates to 1080p so well it's hard to believe it was made for the stupid, old, SD-heavy past where all games looked like they were made out of plasticine coated in petroleum jelly. Stupid blurry past. *Ico Of The Year 2011* is crisp, fluid, bright and beautiful. Yes, the texture work is just a scaled-up version of what came before, but (as we'll also go on to say about *SOTC*) when the textures are as good as they are to begin with, all they need is a lick of polish and you've got yourself a damn fine looker of a game.

And it's abso-bloody-lutely brilliant.

Then there's the other game – some argue it's the better of the two, many simply haven't played it (we're going with the whole 'arrogant dismissal of the gaming commoners' angle) – regardless, it's another experience that we could write about for days in the sorts of

language belonging elsewhere, like **games™** or those websites you pretend to, but don't actually, read. But we won't, because we write for you lot, and apparently you lot like us making dick jokes.

How to fit a dick joke into a review of *Shadow Of The Colossus*... hmm...

As with stablemate *Ico*, *Shadow Of The Colossus* is minimal on story elements – an initial setup and a few, brief lines of dialogue between colossi is all you get, but – again, as with the Team Ico company *SOTC* keeps – it works incredibly well, painting a vivid picture of a world and of lives we don't need to be directly told about. You feel the desperation of Wander, the player character, as he goes to absolutely any length to revive his deceased love. You learn of the bond between the man and his horse, Agro. And without being directly told how to feel, you always feel a tinge of sadness – even tragedy – when you fell one of the 16 gigantic beasts the disembodied voice commands you to take down. It's a game of breathtaking subtlety sitting comfortably alongside equally breathtaking scale and, even six years since it first came out, it doesn't lose any of the exhilarating impact.

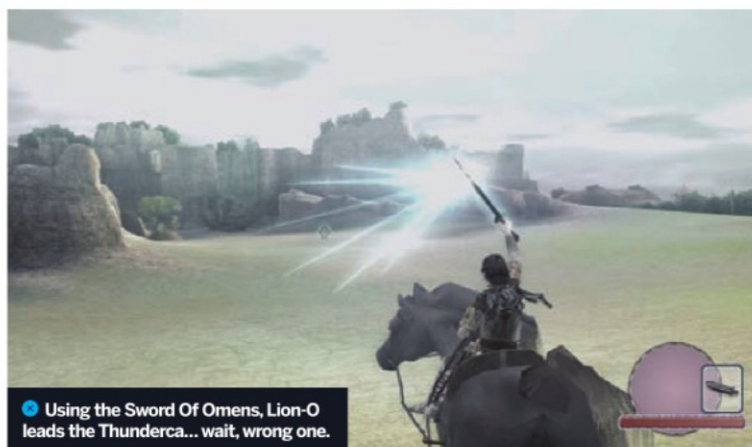
Riding Agro at full speed alongside a flying colossus, trying your hardest to keep pace, line it up and leap from steed to beast – that's still a genuine thrill. Diving away from the clumsy, smashing hands of a lumbering giant whose sleep you have disturbed, escaping instant onset pain by the smallest of margins – that still makes us jump in our seats. Simply running or riding through the legs of one of the behemoths of fur and stone – goosebumps. Genuinely.

Ico and Shadow Of The Colossus are still brilliant games to play, even being nine and six years old

We were asked by Another Person in the office if *Shadow Of The Colossus* has lost any of its impact in the intervening years – we've seen every genre under the sun steal ideas from the game wholesale, after all – but this question was met with a resounding 'no'. In fact, if anything, the graphical overhaul has made the impact that much more than it ever was. Ah, we're gushing. Sorry. It's really great, though.

The fact that Bluepoint has even ironed out the one big sticking point of the original release – the odd spot of "your PS2 is dying right now" crippling slowdown – is the cherry on the cream on the pie on the pizza in the other pie with sprinkles on it and free money as a side dish. There's another confused metaphor for you.

It would be remiss of us to avoid talking about some of the issues with *Shadow Of The Colossus* that tend to be swept under the carpet when rose-tinted specs are donned – which they often are with this particular title. The grip mechanic is integral to the game; it's what makes it the challenge it is. But sometimes – *sometimes* – it's just that bit too annoying for words. When it looks as though Wander has a grip, when it looks as though he should be able to violently stab a gigantic, peaceful beast in the head, he suddenly can't. And, oh, he's lost his grip again for no real reason and, oh, there's a rage comic in here somewhere. Then, just as with *Ico*, there are issues with unresponsive and clumsy controls – sometimes. A wayward jump sending you



Using the Sword Of Omens, Lion-O leads the Thunderca... wait, wrong one.



Not bad for a six-year-old game.



plummeting to the bottom of the structure you've just climbed is bad enough, but when it's a result of *not your fault* it becomes something so much worse. And the amount of times we stood next to that bloody horse just jumping about like a moron... well, we lost count. But that's about it. There's some graphical pop-up (remember that?) but it really isn't an issue, as you will be far too busy being utterly mesmerised to care.

And it's abso-bloody-lutely brilliant.

Five-or-so hours for *Ico*, seven-or-so hours for *Shadow Of The Colossus*, £35 and a lifetime of being able to know you've played them. Can't argue with those odds. This is the feather in the cap of Sony's HD remakes: a respectful and careful adaptation and improvement of the admittedly already-brilliant original assets for the PlayStation 3, worth so much more than the entry fee we want to go to Sony HQ and just throw money at the doorstep until security forcefully removes us. Take our money, Sony. Take it now.

Ian Dransfield

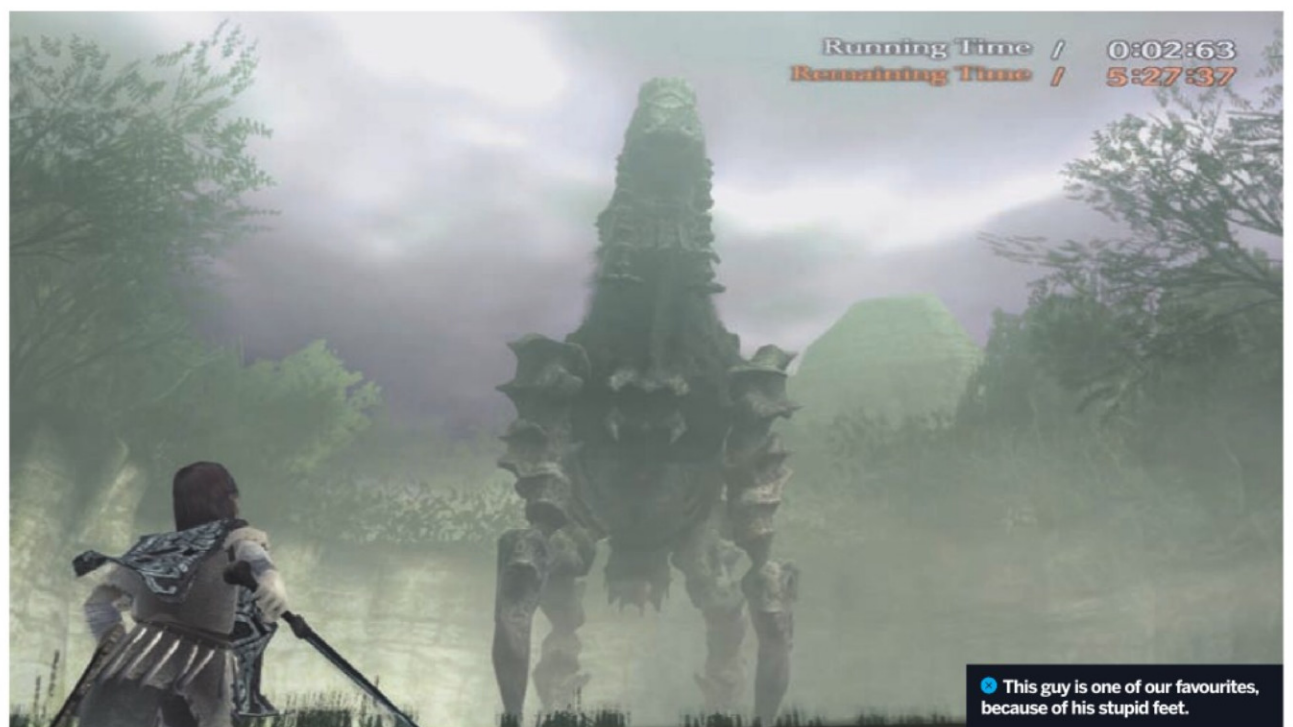
VERDICT

Sony has shown incredible faith in the PS3's user base to put time and money into re-releasing two commercial flops, in the hope that this time people will actually buy them. And you know what? They're absolutely, without a doubt, worth buying.

94%



New desktop picture GET.



This guy is one of our favourites, because of his stupid feet.





RELEASE DATE: 14 OCTOBER

PES 2012

SHOCK NEWS: FIFA is better again; world explodes



PS3

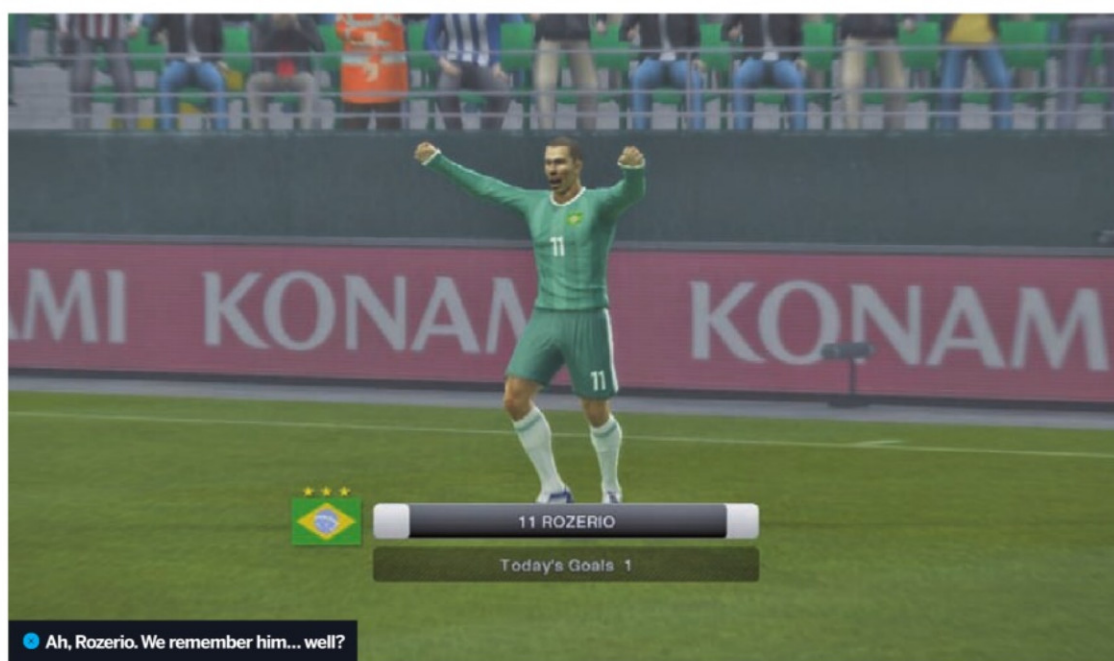
Oh look, it's new PES. Oh look, FIFA's better than it again. Konami's effort scores higher than it did last year thanks to some natty little touches – off-the-ball control and wingplay that actually works – but is held back by some ridiculous additions and a general lack of overall progress or evolution.

One of the big new additions is the Football Life mode – a cover-all term for Master League and 'Be A Legend' mode. The addition of cut-scenes – yes, cut-scenes – to these modes is telling, and makes us think maybe more time could have been spent elsewhere, especially when the supposed depth these extra touches bring actually ruin the experience somewhat.

It's still capable of producing out-of-the-seat jumps of joy

We had a player on our team who, after having not been fielded for *one match*, decided this was an affront to his very being and complained. We couldn't respond to said player, as we had already reached the limit on

The 500th diving header of this particular match.



Ah, Rozerio. We remember him... well?

players we were allowed to speak to for that period. An arbitrary number set up with no real purpose behind it, artificially hampering the enjoyment you can have in the mode and

directly – *directly* – affecting how you end up playing the damn thing. That's just bad design. And that's just one example. Football Life, while it has some cute

touches, such as the chairman's requests (individual challenges, such as collecting no cards in a match), generally falls very flat indeed. Less fluff – we don't need a cut-scene to reveal a new player we've just signed – and more of the stuff we care about: deeper management, interesting negotiations, a better system by which to search for new players and so on. Right now Football Life

feels like a bit of a joke, and it harms PES 2012 because it makes us forget about the game proper.

Which is not a thing to forget about, naturally, as PES still plays a decent game of footy-kick-net. But it also still plays the game it's been playing for five or six years now, ever since the series made the leap to this generation of consoles. When it clicks it's still capable of producing genuine out-of-the-seat jumps of joy, and against friends it's always going to be fun. But when you see your 30th non-connecting diving header of a match, when the AI drags your player back and isn't penalised for it *again*, when the goalies just won't stop parrying – well, it's when we drift back to FIFA.

Ian Dransfield

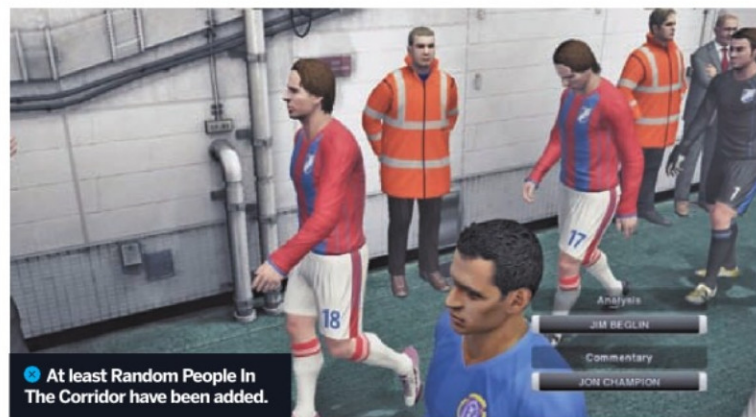
VERDICT

It's better than last year's effort in a fair few ways, and it's heartening to see Konami is trying out a few new things. But the foundation is still old, clunky and in need of some serious modernisation. And drop the Football Life rubbish, please.

74%

DETAILS

Publisher
Konami
Developer
Konami Computer Entertainment Tokyo
Price
£49.99
Players
1-7
Genre
Sports
Age Rating
3
Website
www.konami.com/games/pes2012
Twitter
@Konami
Facebook
<http://on.fb.me/oQ8lcE>



At least Random People In The Corridor have been added.

Or you could try



FIFA 12 Issue 210
Despite a few contentious additions to this year's version, FIFA still rules. 86%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

FIFA 12

One step forward, two stepovers back?

PS3 Playing your first few games of *FIFA 12* will be a shocking experience. You'll run around for a bit, shouting at your defenders and midfielders for constantly being out of position and unable to tackle, thanks to the all-new, all-unnecessary defensive control scheme.

In theory, the proposed change seems worthwhile. Holding down **X** and/or **Q** will no longer see your players closing down the ball carrier with Barcelona-style tenacity. Instead, it's all about getting close enough to your man to hit **Q** (depending on which control scheme you're using) to put in a standing challenge, pull his shirt or muscle him off the ball. We can see why EA put it in, attempting to reduce the 'homing' defences



DETAILS

Publisher
EA
Developer
EA Canada
Price
£54.99
Players
1-7
Genre
Sports
Age Rating
3
Website
easportsfootball.com
Twitter
@ea
Facebook
http://on.fb.me/nt4WL9

of old and introduce a bit of guile to the art of defending.

In practice, it removes defensive competency and shows up FIFA's over-reliance on animations, as well as some poor AI scripting. Closing down your man is a painful mixture of trial and error and second-guessing as your players, no longer able to easily get close to their man in the natural ebb and flow of play, desperately clog around attempting to make a tackle as they enter into yet another one of the seemingly unending animation cycles. In the final third, it's not unusual for attackers to waltz past your defenders as you struggle with the controls.

Turn the controls back to 'Legacy', however, (handily buried in a menu somewhere) and we're back to the *FIFA* we all know and love. The game is less physical than *11*, which makes for more adventurous play as you don't have to worry about being muscled off the ball all the time, and crosses also now work. The bane of the last few *FIFAs*, now good wingplay is rewarded with the ability to actually plant a corker of a ball on Rooney's thatch. Shooting, too, is improved, with a pleasing weight and consistency, and a few new animations improve the range of shots you can pull off.

Sadly, however, the old *FIFA* problems are still there, and so ingrained into the engine that no amount of tweaking seems able to banish them. Players still don't seem individual



There's a feeling that *FIFA* might be running out of ideas

enough – something that *PES*, for all its faults, has always nailed – and there's a reliance on tricks to beat a man. If we're playing as Messi or Ronaldo we want to be able to easily go past players rather than getting knocked off the ball by, say, Titus Bramble.

Finally, despite the new animations, it often feels like you're scoring the same goal over and over again, as the AI teams rather depressingly don't seem to play too differently from each other: Barcelona's pressing game is nowhere to be seen, and most teams just stand off, waiting for you to cede possession. It's still a good game of digital footy, but there's a feeling *FIFA* might be running out of ideas.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

Still a worthy sports title, especially with friends, but the new control system is nightmarish in its learning curve and it's not that different to *11* when the old, superior controls are applied. Those who can't live without a new *FIFA* every year will snap it up, but everyone else may want to assess the real differences between this and *FIFA 11*.

86%





● Elemental weapons might not give much of a damage boost on paper but their special effects can be absolutely life-saving.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Dead Island

When there's no room left in Hell, the dead shall go on holiday



DETAILS

Publisher
Deep Silver
Developer
Techland
Price
£49.99
Players
1-4
Genre
Action-RPG
Age Rating
18
Website
www.deadisland.com
Twitter
@dead_island
Facebook
<http://on.fb.me/r38GcF>



It's official, then. Trailers no longer mean anything in the world of games. For years, the trailer has been the chance for a studio's CG team (or hired help, if they can do the job better) to put out 'target visual' footage which ends up looking nothing like the game ends up – *Killzone 2*, anyone? But as videogames clamour to become an accepted mainstream medium, these trailers are going to extreme new lengths to sell not a game but the idea of a game.

The tougher shamblers can often be whittled down to gruesome wandering toothpicks before they eventually collapse

In fact, the artsy teaser for Techland's slice of open-world zombiegeddon pretty much told us as much about the game as a kebab wrapper does about its contents. And now the finished article's here, somewhat unsurprisingly containing no time reversal, no zombie children, minimal slow motion and an appropriate soundtrack. What the House Of Juarez has delivered instead, though, is a cast of unlikely unlikeables, oceans of blood and a thoroughly

entertaining co-op adventure. It's probably hard to turn that into quite so memorable a trailer, we suppose.

It's a real shame the word 'visceral' has been liberally splashed throughout reviews for years to the point where it has almost lost all meaning because every now and again, a game comes along that is truly deserving of the label. *Dead Island* is one such game, a general lack of empathy for the undead combining with the game's focus on melee weapons to create one of the goriest games in recent memory. Well-placed hammer swings can shatter skulls in an eruption of brain matter, while

razor-sharp blades can dynamically lop off chunks of flesh or entire limbs – the tougher shamblers can often be whittled down to gruesome wandering toothpicks before they eventually collapse. This visual deformation is really quite impressive, almost to the point where the health bars that hover over enemies' heads are unnecessary. Grim, yes, but in tandem with the weighty melee combat around which so much of the game revolves, you've got a massively rewarding central mechanic and one that somehow manages never to get old.

Just as well, too, because the game is bloody massive. While having enemies that more or less scale according to your level means you don't really have to grind side missions in order to get through the narrative, the lure of better weapons and rare loot with which to upgrade your favourite deathstick further still means it's generally pretty hard to stick to the narrative, no matter how urgent the dodgy cut-scenes might make it seem that you do. Weapon mods are the real draw, rare quest rewards that allow gear



● The lack of a guard button is a little surprising, though you soon get used to using nimble dodges and well-timed counters in place of blocking.

to be customised with a number of effects beyond basic damage boosts. Douse a blade in chemicals and laugh as the infected vomit up their corroding guts; set a baseball bat ablaze and be ready to back off when the victim goes up in smoke; lodge a bunch of sharpened shrapnel into a stick to leave lasting wounds that do bleeding damage over time; crudely strap a few batteries to an axe for a shocking jolt of bonus damage. Each mod comes in various strengths – the later, more potent ones generally require the island's rarest items in their creation but whatever the mod, landing a critical will always trigger additional effects that do nasty things to the recipient. Really nasty things, actually. But hey, they're zombies. They have it coming.

Looking at the cast of enemies, it's not hard to see where the *Left 4 Dead* comparisons are coming from. On top of the legions of grunt



● Blunt weapons tend to be weaker than blades, though their increased impact damage on grounded enemies makes them lethal in the right hands.





• All four characters unlock a one-hit-kill stomp for finishing floored foes in a flash, but some get an upgraded, quicker version which is harder to interrupt.

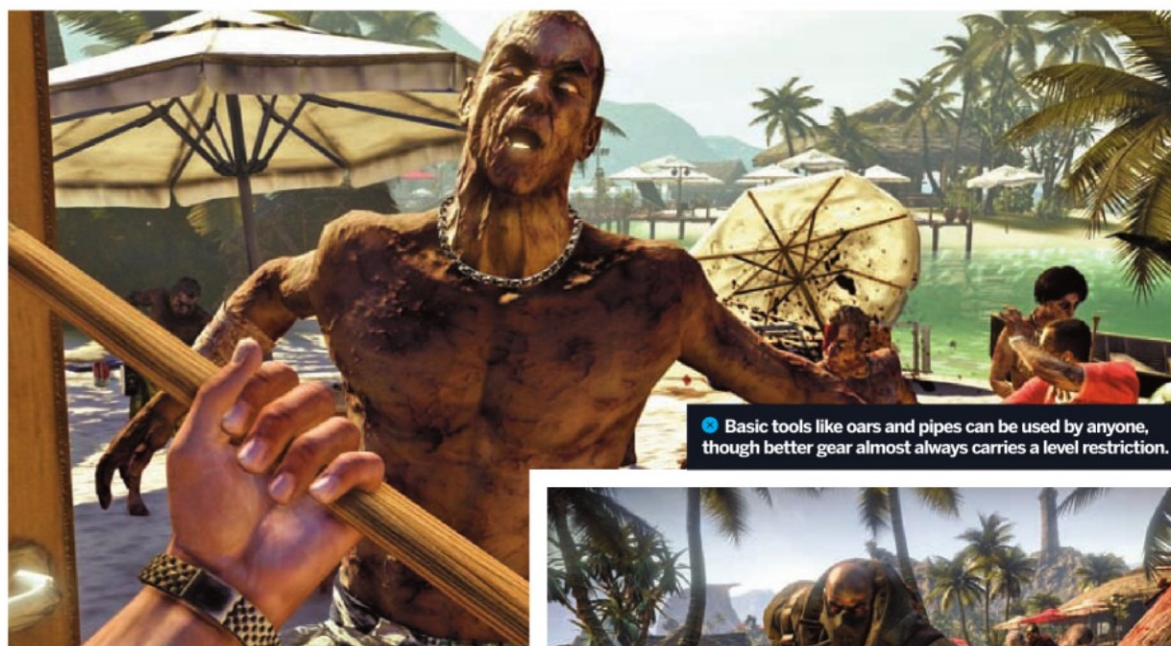


ONE BECOMES FOUR

Just how many of us are there?

ONE OF THE most curious things about *Dead Island* is how the survivors that dish out quests talk to you, schizophrenically jumping from addressing your one character directly and speaking to a group even if you're the only person in the room with them. It's clearly a concession to the fact that you *could* be playing co-op but it's no less jarring even with an

explanation on hand. Similarly, cut-scenes always show all four different characters, whether you're playing solo or online with three other Sam Bs. That's not the only problem, either. One particular cut-scene references one event from hours ago in the story alongside one that hasn't even happened yet. Oh *Dead Island*, you are a silly game...



• Basic tools like oars and pipes can be used by anyone, though better gear almost always carries a level restriction.

zombies (here broken down into shuffling Walkers and sprinting Infected), there's a hierarchy of more powerful braindead foes that bear more than a passing resemblance to Valve's Special Infected. But on a gameplay level, *Dead Island* is actually far closer to *Borderlands*. The two could almost be related, they're that similar. But while Gearbox's game champions guns over all else, Techland's decision to stick primarily to close combat makes this feel like an original prospect even while the rest of the core mechanics tell a very different story. It's not all melee, mind you. If only it were...

The Cartel may have totally jumped the shark but *Bound In Blood* and (to a lesser extent) the original *Call Of Juarez* showed that Techland is far from incompetent when it comes to doing solid gunplay. *Dead Island* seems out to debunk this semi-positive

statement altogether and when it starts throwing rooms full of gun-toting human opposition your way, the game completely kicks itself in its own balls. Gun handling is clumsy to say the least, though the worst part is that the freedom with which the rest of the game lets you approach combat situations vanishes here – it's either return fire from a safe distance or die in the crossfire while trying to get close. Actually, that's not even the worst part. That particular honour goes to the AI, or at least that of human enemies. Techland has somehow managed to make its survivors far more braindead than the zombies, looters and thugs strolling around almost aimlessly in the middle of firefights and occasionally even catching sight of something shiny and aiming in completely the wrong direction. On the positive side, pure human opposition is pretty rare – things are much better when the other >



• You can't harm other players with regular attacks, though it's still a good idea to watch where you're slashing/shooting, if only to save on stamina and ammo.





➤ survivors have something other than you and your friends to riddle with bullets, if only because there's that much more going on.

It's far from the only flaw *Dead Island* boasts, but it's one of the few that it doesn't manage to mask or make up for. In fact, the whole game – as are so many that attempt this kind of huge scope – is riddled with bugs, glitches and annoyances. But just as *Fallout 3* covered its blemishes with untold freedom and *Alpha Protocol* hid its plentiful ugly with meaningful decisions, *Dead Island's* meaty combat and compelling loot drop system make it hard to dwell on the fact that it's hardly the most polished of games.

Overlooking the odd technical hiccup on the strength of other areas is one thing but there are certainly a few core design choices that would best be described as 'questionable'. When so many quests revolve around the concept of supplies being critically low, having everything in the game respawn after a short time makes a mockery of the survivors' plight. That a horde of zombies should reappear in an area makes some degree of canonical sense; that the same is true of cans of food and bottled water somewhat less so. Similarly, having every action cost a portion of your stamina gauge is a great decision in preventing mash-happy combat and building tension. But when the kick attack for some reason is exempt from such stamina drain, solo enemies and small groups can just be booted to the ground without damaging your weapons or denting stamina, a problem exacerbated once you unlock the ability to stomp the heads of downed foes for an instant kill. There's even an argument for some harsher penalty for death, since losing a negligible portion of your

bankroll and being set back (or, in some odd instances, forward) a few feet is hardly a fitting deterrent for getting slaughtered.

The most questionable decision of all actually turns out to be one of *Dead Island's* best features, though, so it's clear that there's at least some method to Techland's madness. With four unique and complementary characters to choose from, co-operative

While the trailer might have been a case of style over substance, the final game is the polar opposite

play was always going to be a key feature of *Dead Island* and while its implementation is a little strange, it's much like the rest of the game in that when it does work, it *really* works. The default option is to have players able to freely join your game and while this can be a godsend for those tricky moments, it also means there's nothing to stop higher-level players coming in and seeing off key missions for you, which can make some narrative threads hard to follow. Find a decent group, though, and *Dead Island* quickly goes from good to excellent. Although differences between characters are quite subtle compared to most class-based experiences, they're significant enough for patterns to start emerging – Xians and Purnas used to hectic solo play slowly learn to let Sam B pull aggro in order to better use their perks and bonuses, though levelling your chosen character really needs to be done with either a solo or party mentality from the off, lest you be left with a jack-of-all-trades build. But hey, maybe that's what you want.

It might sound cliché to refer to *Dead Island* as a flawed gem but just like our earlier use of everyone's favourite abused adjective 'visceral', it's simply the best way to describe Techland's ambitious stab at something much bigger than the studio has ever attempted before. While technically erratic and plagued by petty annoyances, those willing to overlook *Dead Island's* trivial issues and nod along with the more curious design decisions will find a hell of a lot to like on Banoi. And even more so when exploring with

friends, the otherwise hidden intricacies of the character skill trees coming to the fore for four unlikely zombie re-murderers.

While the trailer might have been a case of style over substance, the final game is the polar opposite – a rough and ready zombie epic whose ideas and core mechanics more than make up for its technical blips and lack of polish. And hey, it could be worse. You could have ended up playing a game where a girl dies backwards in slow motion for a bit. That would have sucked.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Technically robust, conceptually original, finely polished... *Dead Island* is none of these things. What it is, though, is a brutal and strangely compelling horror epic that overcomes its issues on the back of several core strengths. Happiness, it seems, is a bloody stump where there should be a head.

79%



Firearms are awesome on human foes but pretty lame on zombies. Go figure...



Audio cues are often misleading, screams and other noises used simply to build tension rather than indicate impending undead doom.



Sam B

Xian

Purna

MEET THE TEAM

Each of Dead Island's four heroes has their own role to play...

SAM B:

Role: Tank

Speciality: Blunt Weapons

Profile: A one-hit wonder rapper with the best overall stats, the unique ability to regenerate health and a focus on crowd control, Sam B is always supposed to be in the thick of it and if he's not, you're playing him wrong. Let him draw the pack then send them all flying and the rest of the team can make short work of just about any situation.

LOGAN:

Role: All-Rounder

Speciality: Thrown Weapons

Profile: Just your average ex-pro sportsman that went off the rails and killed someone in a drink-driving accident, really. Logan's focus is on lobbing his weapons rather than slashing and smashing with them (to the point where he can somehow have them come back to him, boomerang style) but he also gets upgrades in all weapon classes and generally finds better loot than the others.

XIAN:

Role: Damage/Healer

Speciality: Bladed Weapons

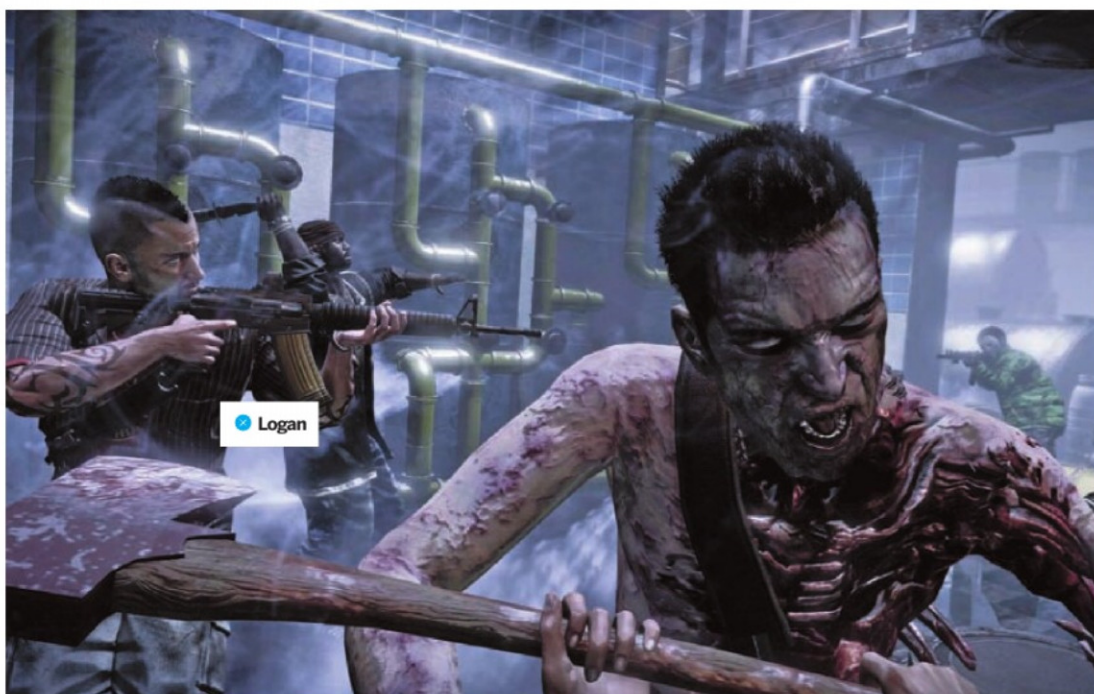
Profile: She might be fragile but when it comes to slicing the undead to pieces, Xian is a cut above the rest of *Dead Island's* cast. Load her up with blades and watch the limbs fly – it's especially easy to find the opening needed to hack off a body part or two when Sam B's increased aggro means most of the enemies have their backs to you. Just as handy with bandages as she is with a blade, too...

PURNA:

Role: Ranged Support

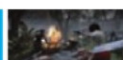
Speciality: Firearms

Profile: The melee focus of the game and the fact that guns aren't introduced for quite some time makes Purna one for the more patient player but once she gets her hands on a pistol, rifle or shotgun, she's absolutely lethal with it. Try to pop skulls from a distance while the rest of the group holds the zombies' attention, using Rage and auras to buff the party's damage output.



Logan

Previously...
in Play



PREVIEWED Issue 208
"Working together seemed to make combat a great deal more enjoyable."

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Bodycount

A game so tedious even interesting standfirsts elude us



Whoever it is you're playing as in *Bodycount* – and we're not really sure who, because the game never bothers to tell you – is one hell of a one-man-army with an appetite for overkill.

Slapped down in the middle of the fictional Tesanga City, Africa – apparently to stop a civil war, although the game doesn't properly explain that – you'll find your no-name, no-voice, no-personality protagonist using

Not great, not awful, but not solid or robust. It's an uninspired, insipid FPS

C4 to blow up padlocks, firing SAM turrets at warehouse doors to blast them open and shredding apart walls, furniture and enemy soldiers without abandon as he maniacally bounds from one waypoint to the next.

Sounds exciting, right? Well, no. If the above description creates a warm nostalgic feeling for 2006's classic PS2 shooter *Black*, on which many of the same team worked as *Bodycount*,

then please dispel those happy memories from your mind. *Bodycount* is one of the most flavourless, flat and flaky shooters we've played in some time. It doesn't do anything overtly wrong, but it doesn't do anything that tickles our FPS sweet spot either. *Bodycount* just is.

A large part of the problem is that complete lack of personality we've mentioned. *Bodycount* slaps you down in the middle of an unknown and uninteresting conflict and a voice in your ear tells

you to head to the next checkpoint. And so you do for the next six hours, the between-missions briefing

screens and nattering in your ear from what feels like the only voice actor in the game doing little to enhance a narrative that consists of no more than go there, kill him, hack that, blow up this.

And although *Bodycount* can be quite visually arresting at times, for the most part its artistic direction doesn't do much to show off the admittedly fantastic lighting. Levels are largely the videogame equivalent of stock



DETAILS

Publisher
Codemasters
Developer
Codemasters
Price
£39.99
Players
1-2 (co-op) 12 (online)
Genre
FPS
Age Rating
16
Website
www.bodycountgame.com
Twitter
[@bodycountgame](https://twitter.com/bodycountgame)
Facebook
www.facebook.com/Bodycountgame

photography – nothing new or exciting, just fancy snapshots of standard FPS environments – and even when *Bodycount* attempts to mix it up a bit by sending you into sleek, subterranean, sci-fi bases called Nexus (Nexi?) the feeling is of playing a level on *Perfect Dark* rather than a contemporary shooter.

But that's enough about how it looks. How does it play? Short answer: it plays okay.

Long answer: the levels are nicely designed, being large and open and despite their overarching linearity they still offer plenty of angles for approach. And although the destructible environments are laughable when compared to DICE's *Frostbite 2.0*, they're colourful and exciting nevertheless. Throwing a grenade at a cluster of enemy soldiers is one of the very few pleasures *Bodycount* manages to keep satisfying right through to the end of the game – the resulting chaotic spectacle of visuals and violence is something to be savoured.

Still, someone at Codemasters needs a slap – the person whose idea it was to keep the player rooted to the spot when aiming down the sights of their weapon. You can duck and lean, but you can't move or strafe, which can really break the flow of a good firefight. Codemasters clearly intends for its players to use ADS (Aim Down Sights) for cover-based gameplay, crouching behind scenery and popping in and out of it to pick off enemies. But *Bodycount* is too fast, too arcade-y, and its enemies too aggressive for this. Simply put, using iron sights in *Bodycount* forces you to stand still in a game that demands near-constant movement in order for the player to be successful or actually have any fun.

There's an issue with the Skillshot system, too. No, we haven't gone mental and started to write a review of *Bulletstorm* by accident, *Bodycount* really is just that lazy in its naming conventions. Like *Bulletstorm*, players can attempt to rack up combos and Skillshots, and will be graded



Bodycount's level design is one of its more impressive features, with large, multi-pathed levels that would be great for combat if the AI wasn't so thick.

Or you could try



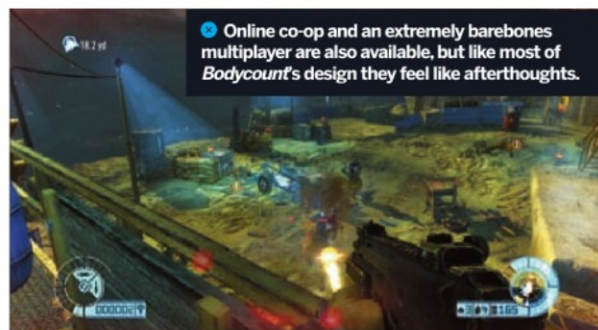
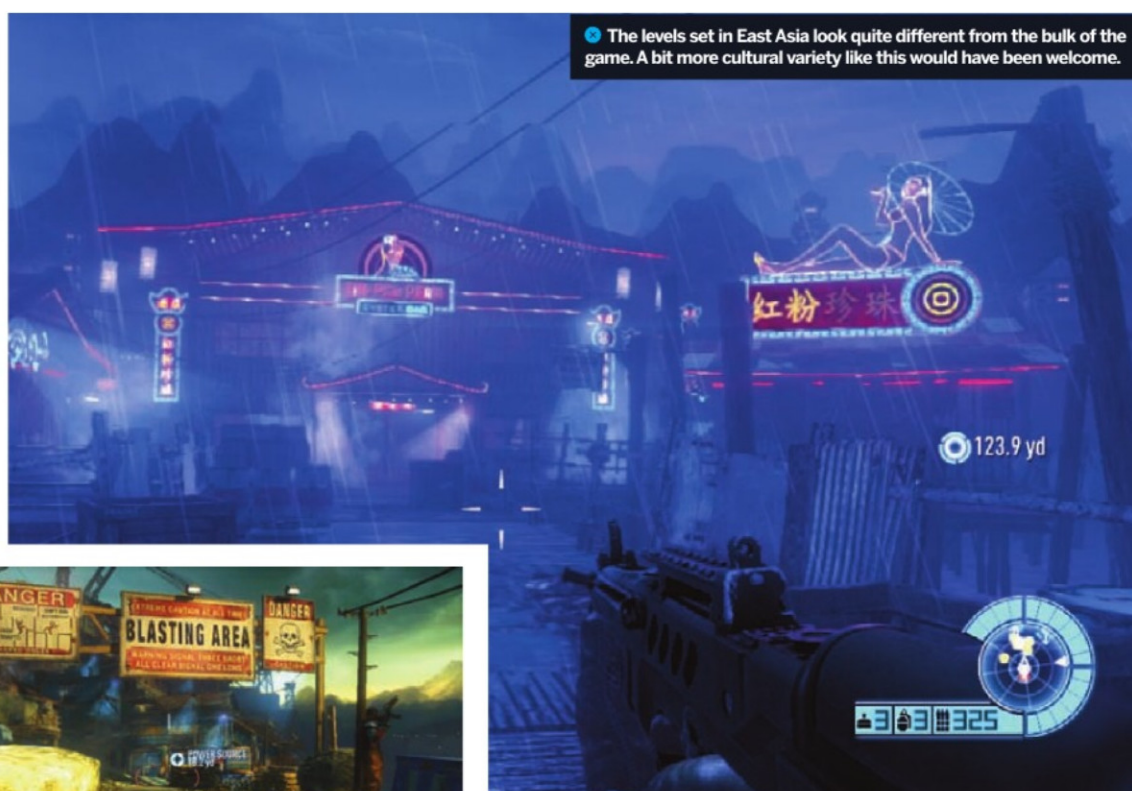
Bulletstorm issue 203
If you want to play a game that's more creative with its Skillshots then look no further than People Can Fly's uncouth shooter. **86%**



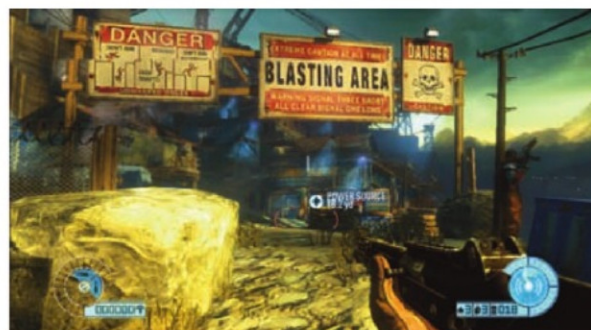
The melee attack is one of the worst we've ever experienced. You might as well just throw wet spaghetti at your enemy for all the good it does.



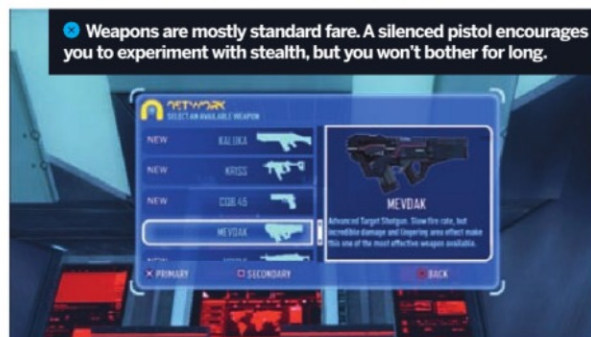
The levels set in East Asia look quite different from the bulk of the game. A bit more cultural variety like this would have been welcome.



Online co-op and an extremely barebones multiplayer are also available, but like most of Bodycount's design they feel like afterthoughts.



Weapons are mostly standard fare. A silenced pistol encourages you to experiment with stealth, but you won't bother for long.



GATHERING INTEL

A helping hand to rack up the bodycount

THE PROTAGONIST IN *Bodycount* is blessed with four special abilities to that aid him in battle, each of which is powered by 'Intel' dropped by dead enemies. Adrenaline makes you invulnerable for a limited time, and when it's upgraded later in the game it also makes you move faster. Pulse Wave highlights enemies with a blue glow, and Airstrike calls in an overhead attack at the cost of your entire Intel bar. Explosive Bullets, meanwhile, are self-explanatory. Like much in *Bodycount* these abilities feel like an afterthought rather than a core piece of design – the ability to move faster when using Adrenaline was originally a bug, for instance. Still, the powers add a welcome change of pace to *Bodycount*'s action, and at times even reminded us of *Crysis 2* and the Nanosuit's abilities. Only nowhere near as good, of course.

for their performance at the end of each level. However, while *Bulletstorm* rewarded players for shooting enemies in the bollocks, *Bodycount* simply awards for actions as mind-numbingly mundane as shooting enemies from behind. It's a hopelessly bland and pointless mechanic.

Once you've completed *Bodycount*, you'll probably feel the same as us – what *Bodycount* really needed was more time, a bigger budget, and a less troubled development process. With creative director Stuart Black leaving the project halfway though you can't help but feel that something went wrong here.

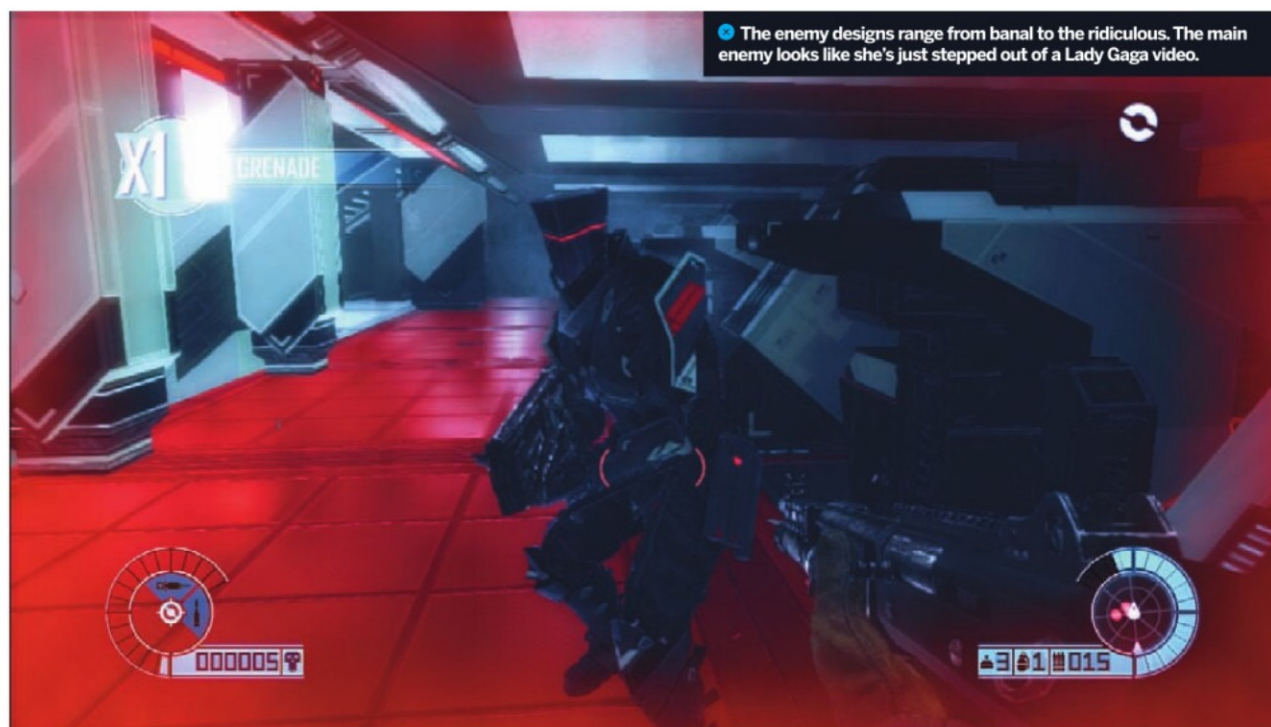
Bodycount could have been something good; there are trace elements of *Black* hidden very deep within its DNA. But they're not evident enough. *Bodycount* is the very definition of mindless shooting. Not great, not awful, but not solid or robust. It's an uninspired, insipid FPS, the kind of mediocre triple-A shooter we're seeing a lot less of in this world of *Call Of Dutys* and *Battlefields*. After playing *Bodycount*, we can only conclude that's probably a good thing.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

Bodycount is a depressingly average game attempting to make a mark in an overcrowded genre. This could have been a spiritual successor to *Black*, instead it's another forgettable FPS in a market that's increasingly hostile towards them.

54%



The enemy designs range from banal to the ridiculous. The main enemy looks like she's just stepped out of a Lady Gaga video.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

God Of War Collection: Volume II

Can Kratos's PSP adventures cut it on the big screen?



DETAILS

Publisher
Sony Computer Entertainment
Developer
Ready at Dawn
Price
£27.99
Players
1
Genre
Hack-'n'-slash
Age Rating
18
Website
godofwar.com
Twitter
@PlayStationEU
Facebook
http://on.fb.me/rqQPhY



Let's get this review started with a simple disclaimer: if you're a die-hard fan of *God Of War*, or loved the PSP instalments so much that you'd play them again on the Spectrum, then popping *God Of War Collection: Volume II* into your PS3 for the first time is going to seem like that Christmas when you finally got your PS3/Thundercats playset/AK47. It's a beautiful conversion, that much is true. Now run along and buy it.

If you're still here, then you're probably not a massive *GOW* fan and are looking to see if this is worth your time and money, or are just reading this on the train to pass the time. Either way this latest HD collection is worthy of your attention: just don't go expecting anything other than the 'hack/slash/look in awe at massive vista/hack/slash' paradigm that was starting to feel a little bit tired by the end of *God Of War III*.

First, for those of you who haven't played the games before, here's a quick recap. *Chains Of Olympus* was released in 2008, and forms the opening instalment of the *God Of War* saga. Kratos, in service to the gods at this point, has to prevent Persephone from plunging the world (and by extension Olympus) into permanent darkness with the aid of Morpheus. No, not that one. In doing so he also has to contend with both the

knowledge that there's a chance he could be reunited with his deceased daughter and his mission to recover Helios, god of sun, who has been kidnapped by Persephone and Morpheus.

Ghost Of Sparta, released in 2010 and again developed by Ready at Dawn (with additional development by SCE Santa Monica), takes place between the first and second games. After killing Ares and claiming the title of God of War in the first game, Kratos discovers that his brother Deimos – whom he previously thought was dead – has been kidnapped and held prisoner by Thanatos, the god of death. Cue another blood-soaked rampage.

Both games are wonderfully ported: *God Of War*'s striking and clean visuals easily upscale, and testament really must be given to how wonderful Ready at Dawn's art direction for the

from there. Smashing your way through the gigantic Atlantis as it sinks is awesome in the truest sense of the word, especially when you factor in that this game began life on the PSP.

Chains Of Olympus – the first of the two released – also boasts its own show-stopping moments, and in general both games retain the same feel as their bigger brothers on PS2 and PS3, even if they can't quite match them.

It's not long, however, until the combat begins to grow rather stale. Not bad, just a little samey, and after destroying our 10,000th basic enemy we were desperate to just run through the fantastically realised worlds and see which set piece came next. Which, for a game called *God Of War* (not 'God Of Sightseeing') isn't the best of situations.

There's also the question of length, at least with *Chains Of Olympus*. As befits its former stature of being a slice of handheld-based murder, *Chains Of Olympus* isn't very long: Kratos's journey for vengeance will be over in a matter of hours, with six being a conservative estimate. *Ghost Of Sparta* is longer, however, clocking around eight to ten hours.

Both experiences suffer slightly from the nagging feeling that these are simplified versions of the PS2 games, which they are. It's imperceptible at first, but a few hours of little variety in the combat and it begins to creep into your thinking. With combos and magic attacks recycled or remixed from the original

For those looking to flesh out their God Of War experience, however, Volume II is a nice addition, if by no means essential

two games is. Importantly, the frame rate is also solid, meaning that when you get killed it's your fault. Yes it is.

Of the two titles, *Ghost Of Sparta* is marginally the more impressive, boasting a scale that would put full PS3 releases to shame. Beginning with a boat-based battle that instantly recalls the opening of the original game, *Sparta* gets better



Or you
could try



God Of War Collection Issue 188
Even if you've never played *God Of War* before, you need this compilation on PS3. It's that simple. **93%**



HITS

6



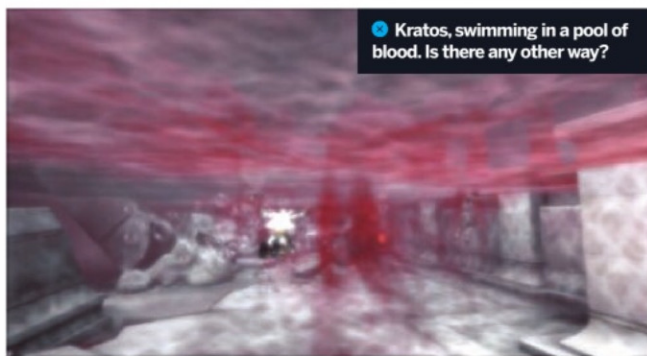
• The scale is still impressive. LOOK AT IT!



• The upscaled graphics show off how good *Ready at Dawn's* artwork truly is.

2766

5 HITS



• Kratos, swimming in a pool of blood. Is there any other way?



HERE COMES A NEW CHALLENGER!

Challenge modes make Kratos even stronger **AS WITH THE** other games in the *God Of War* series, both *Chains Of Olympus* and *Ghost Of Sparta* both have unlockable challenges for the player to test their skills in, named Challenge of Hades and Challenge of the Gods respectively. Boasting specific requirements (kill a certain amount of enemies without getting hit, destroy waves of enemies and so on) both sets of challenges are diverting, but they're not going to change your life. They will, however, probably make you better at *God Of War*.



26 HITS

games there's very little here that won't already have been seen by the *God Of War* veteran, and newcomers may find themselves tiring easily.

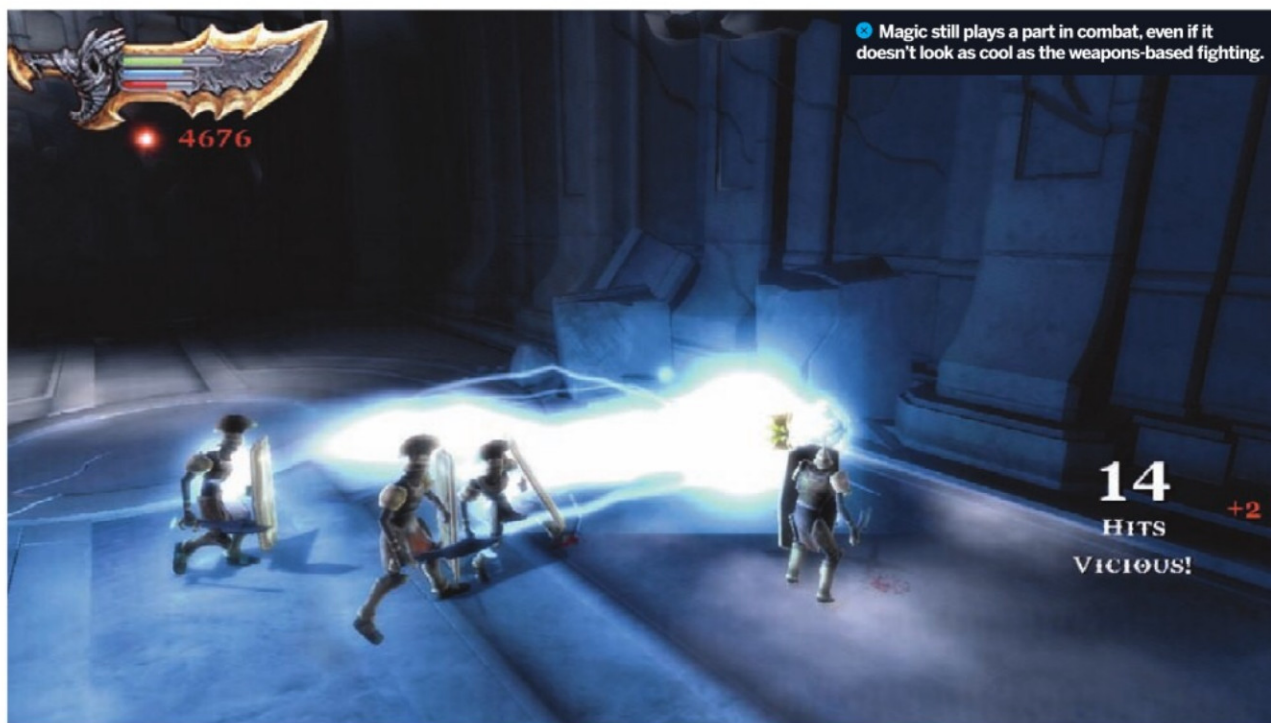
Still, *God Of War Collection: Volume II* is still a reasonably good buy, even if it can't match the value of the first collection. Those looking to get started on the franchise would be wise to start there, otherwise certain plot elements will appear arbitrary or flat-out confusing. For those looking to flesh out their *God Of War* experience, however, *Volume II* is a nice addition, if by no means essential.

Steve Burns

VERDICT

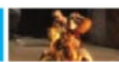
If you love *God Of War*, then this package is a no-brainer. If not, however, then it's probably worth checking out the original *God Of War Collection*, as *Volume II's* status as a loving port of PSP titles isn't the best introduction to the series.

70%



• Magic still plays a part in combat, even if it doesn't look as cool as the weapons-based fighting.

14 HITS +2 VIOLENCE!



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Classic Trilogy HD

Return to the shadows...

PS3

It's a tough job to review something like this, when admittedly, the HD upgrade is only a partial factor as to why the game has received the score it has. While the iconic *Splinter Cell* gameplay has us falling in love (almost) all over again, other missing elements left us wanting to have kept it buried. *Chaos Theory*'s standout stealth action gameplay sets the standard for all in its genre and still remains an absolute joy to play. On the other hand, however, the original *Splinter Cell* title seems to be feeling the pains of ageing and even suffers from slowdown issues despite Ubisoft's claims that the game runs at a consistent 60fps – an issue that irked us throughout our playthrough of this classic.

Though the biggest disappointment here is, without a doubt, the lack of multiplayer. Ubisoft chose to strip the games of all multiplayer functionality, including the co-

operative campaign without reason, which means if you were hoping to relive the glory days of *Chaos Theory*'s multiplayer you'll have to look elsewhere.

Other than this, the three games play just fine and provided us with more nostalgia than you can shake a stick at. The games are all untouched albeit a little shinier than before, although it's often hard to even notice the difference since the magic of said nostalgia is pretty sure to make them look just as good in your head as they do today. As for us, *Chaos Theory* was the personal favourite with *Pandora Tomorrow* coming in at a close second.

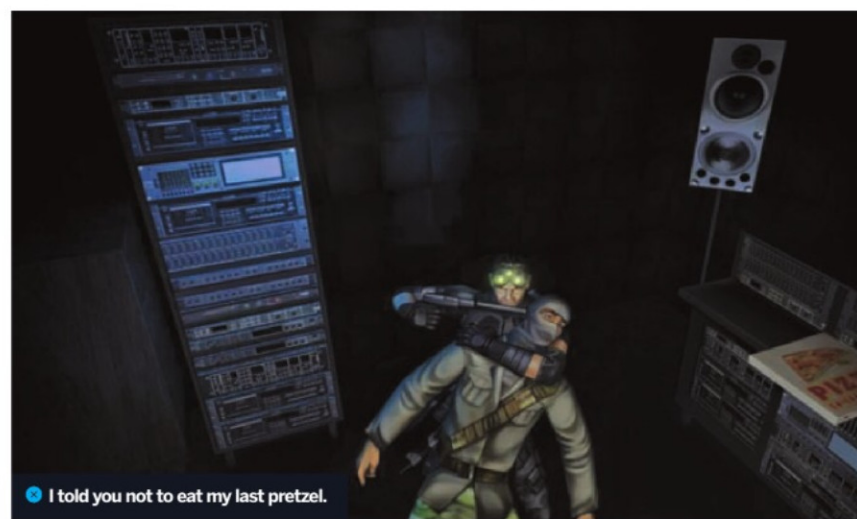
The stereoscopic 3D is great if you're one of the lucky few to have a television set that supports it, so you can enjoy Sam Fisher in 3D in-between bouts of leaning out your ivory tower and firing arrows at the inferior television-owning peasants below.

It's no secret that high-definition remakes are certainly in vogue right now, what with *Tomb Raider*, *Prince Of Persia* and the *Ico* series receiving the same treatment. But is it really necessary or is this purely and simply those greedy publishers cashing in on their older and more successful titles? Who knows, maybe you do, but not us, we just know that the *Splinter Cell* Trilogy isn't all that, even in 'HD'.

● I appear to have brought the wrong camouflage, how embarrassing.



● It's all playable in stereoscopic 3D... apparently.

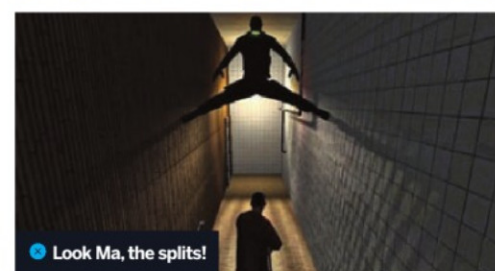


● I told you not to eat my last pretzel.



DETAILS

Publisher
Ubisoft
Developer
Ubisoft
Price
£24.99
Players
1
Genre
Action-adventure
Age Rating
15
Website
www.ubi.com/uk/default.aspx
Twitter
@Ubisoft
Facebook
<http://on.fb.me/oXC5CG>



● Look Ma, the splits!

Despite their flaws, though, it's probably worth revisiting as it's available for a budget price tag and, heck, if you've never played any of these classics before then in the words of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, there's never been a better time than right now...

Mike Bell

VERDICT

The first one is still tough as nails, the second one is still a letdown, the third one is still brilliant, the lack of multiplayer is disappointing, the HD gloss is nice, the frame-rate issues are still annoying. Most comprehensive verdict ever? You betcha.

78%





Goalmouth scrambles can be exhilarating. No, really.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

NHL 12

Now with added EA Sports Minor Additions™!



DETAILS

Publisher
EA
Developer
EA Sports
Price
£49.99
Players
1-7
Genre
Sports
Age Rating
16
Website
www.ea.com/nhl
Twitter
@EASportsNHL
Facebook
facebook.com/
pages/NHL-
12/152909
334737533

PS3 We've reached something of a tipping point now with *NHL 12*. While we were fine trundling along, allowing for minor changes and improvements here and there, we're now calling it: this is the same game that's come out three years running now. Yes, you can play the Winter Classic (it's outdoors! Wow!), yes, helmets can be knocked off with hard hits, yes, Wayne Gretzky is in it... but no one change offers anything truly new, or anything that makes this worth buying over *NHL 11*, *10*, *09* or *08*. So we're calling it: we're done with these minor updates. Just as the *SmackDown Vs Raw* series started to take the piss, we're now feeling that *NHL* is going down a similar route: not releasing bad games, per se, just releasing games with little to no real improvements over last year's effort.

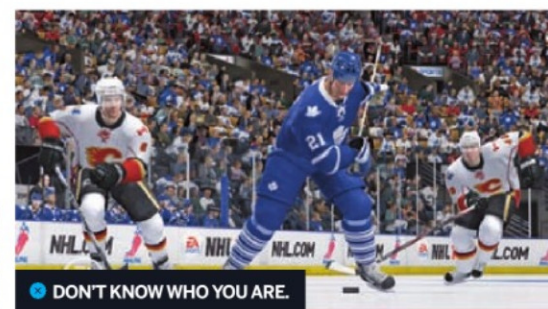
That's not to say *NHL 12* is bad by any means – it's not. In fact, it's fast-paced fun for players of any skill level. You can even get by if you don't know what a power play is – something we pointed out our lack of knowledge about back in *Play 184* and

something we *still* haven't bothered looking up. While passing sometimes feels loose and imprecise, the majority of each game plays out in a functional and flowing fashion, lending itself to some fine experiences.

NHL 12 is a fun experience that will surely last you a long time. Be A Pro is fun (though

Buy it if you don't have any of EA's NHL games from the last few years, avoid it if you have

hamstrung somewhat by ineffective teammates) and plenty of other, long-running modes are available to keep you playing for a long time. Plus, of course, in multiplayer it's a hoot. But the problem is merely adding the ability to rough up the goalie – something that actually used to be in the series years ago – isn't enough for this to be recommended to hockey aficionados. Introducing smashable glass is fine, but then relying on bragging about it as a killer new feature is pushing it, to say the least. Some basic changes to GM mode might be necessary, but are they enough to get anyone excited? We doubt it.



DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE.



Goalies always look a bit overdressed to us.



It's a good game, but it's getting more and more difficult to be anything like enthusiastic about the *NHL* series with each and every passing year. Buy it if you don't have any of EA's *NHL* games from the last few years, avoid it if you have – you've already got a game that's nearly as good.

Ian Dransfield

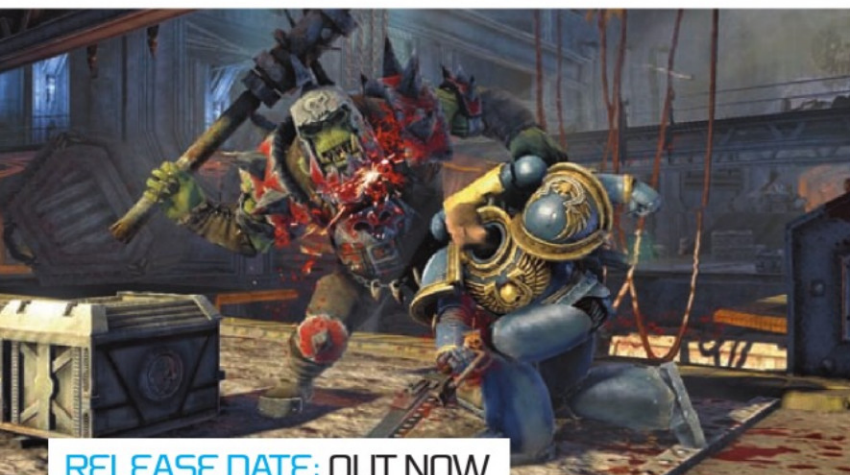
VERDICT

NHL 12 is a good game, but it is absolutely not worth getting if you have any earlier iterations of the *NHL* series. Minor improvements do not make this good value for money and as such it's difficult to get really enthusiastic with our praise.

78%



NHL 11 Issue 198
We were in a more generous, giving mood last time around. **89%**



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



Warhammer 40k: Space Marine

And we thought the tabletop game could be boring

PS3 PlayStation 3 might not have any *Halo* games, and it may be lacking *Gears Of War*, but don't worry too much because at least there's now *Space Marine*. The title characters of this Warhammer 40,000 tie-in are the well from which those of almost every modern sci-fi

Space Marine's combat is best described as 'easy to learn, easy to master'

shooter springs – huge meat-trees of men, stacked twice as high as your average steroid-pumped wrestler and topped off with shoulder pads large enough for a grizzly bear.

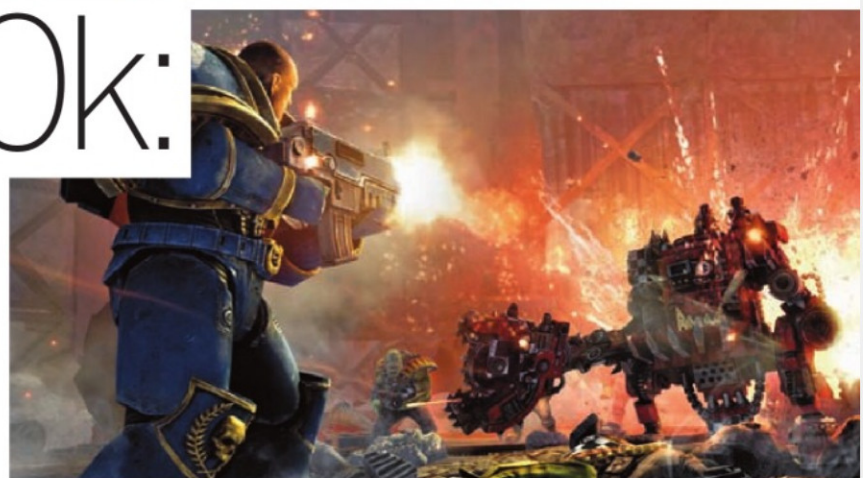
So who needs Marcus Fenix, then? Well, this game certainly does. While Warhammer's Ultramarines might look the part, like an *X Factor* contestant with Auto-Tune switched off, they disappoint when compared to the pros. It's not so much that *Space Marine* is a bad game – both its design and execution are perfectly sound – but the overall experience is just so mediocre and lacking in memorable moments.

Space Marine's general underachievement is best exemplified by the core of the game, its combat. One of the first and most obvious

things you'll notice about it is that unlike most modern third-person shooters, there's no cover system. Which is actually one of the things this game gets right. By omitting the ability to hide behind walls taking potshots from relative safety, it puts you right in the thick of things and tries to overwhelm you as hordes of Orks swarm in on your position. There's a real sense of

urgency and danger here, as you vainly attempt to control the crowd through gunfire and grenades before finally resorting to the up-close-and-personal approach by hacking through the remaining Orks with your choice of melee weapon. Which is where it all begins to fall apart. *Space Marine's* melee combat is limited in scope, with just two attack buttons to combo together. And while this isn't necessarily a bad thing in theory – *El Shaddai*, for example, plunders untold depths from its one-button combat through clever variations in timing and positioning – *Space Marine's* combat is best described as 'easy to learn, easy to master'.

It's almost the exact opposite of fun... very quickly you learn that *Space Marine* can be



DETAILS

Publisher THQ
Developer Relic
Price £49.99
Players 1-16
Genre Third-person shooter
Age Rating 18
Website www.spacemarine.com/
Twitter @SpaceMarine
Facebook www.facebook.com/WH40kSpaceMarine

sleepwalked through by repeating the same basic routine over and over. Shoot a few enemies, then plough into them with a melee weapon, making sure to reap extra health every now and then by performing a stun move, finally building up the power meter for a few seconds of extra-powerful, near-invincible fighting. The game does try to inject some variation by periodically throwing in ever harder enemies, but the strategy for dealing with them never evolves.

The backbone of *Space Marine* is its series of rooms that have to be cleared of enemies before you can effectively move onto the next, and it only takes two or three of these for you to realise how limited the scope of the gameplay is and for boring drudgery to set in. Things are spiced up a bit now and then with set pieces or boss battles but all of them lack the imagination or the challenge necessary to provide the intended sense of pacing and relief. Instead, they're just another set of plodding scenes in a game that just feels like it's going through the motions.

It's such a shame that *Space Marine* so completely fails to capture the imagination because there was a lot of potential here.





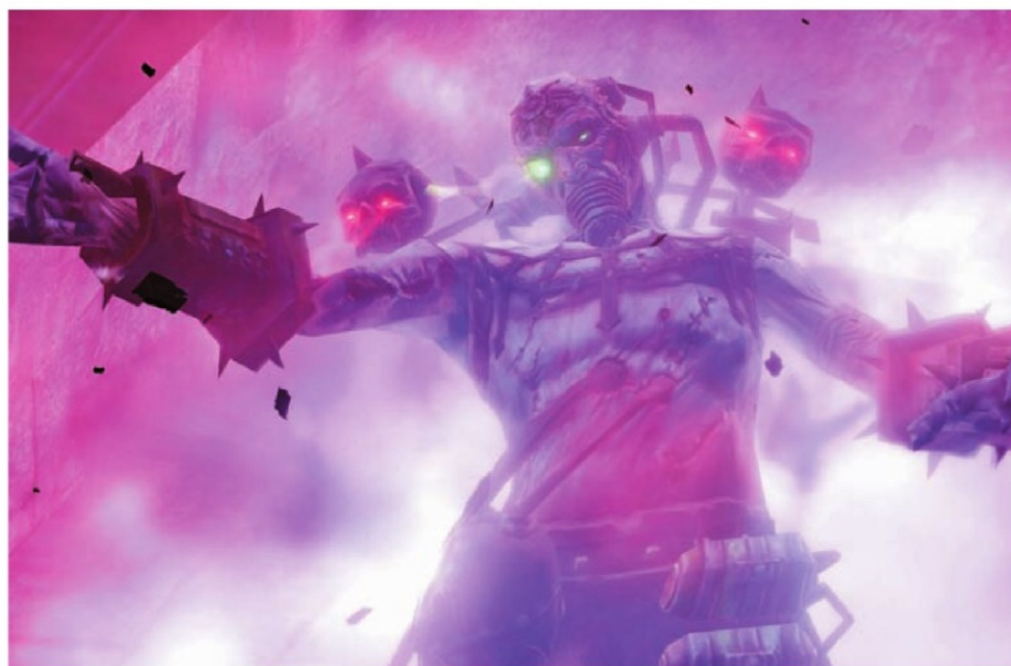
With just two attack buttons the melee combat is rather limited.



Warhammer 40k: Space Marine



Space Marine fails to offer the depth of the tabletop game and also fails to excel as a videogame.



The Warhammer 40,000 universe may be as generic as they come but it does have a rich history and detail that could have been exploited here. In some respects you can see where the developer tried to do this – the character models are especially good; faithful to the original game's design, chunkily built and with an almost hand-painted style that echoes the tabletop game's miniatures – but the rest of the game fails to do anything else of interest with the licence. The story and dialogue is perfunctory at best, serving only to move the game forward, while the depressingly linear level design neuters any hope of creating a believable world to explore. So if you happen to be a fan of the Warhammer universe, this might not be the game you've been waiting for – especially if you're also expecting the rich, tactical gameplay of the tabletop game to be matched by any level of complexity in *Space Marine's* action.

In short, *Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine* does far too little with its licence to be considered a genuinely good *Warhammer* game while also failing to excel as a videogame in its own right. Though technically accomplished – everything works and is bug-free – *Space Marine's* crime is that it's simply too boring. We'd have just as much fun playing with a bunch of Warhammer's unpainted plastic models.

Ashley Day

VERDICT

Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine is the sort of simple, dumb, licensed game that causes the shelves of your local game shop to buckle under the weight of sheer undesirable mediocrity. In case you hadn't guessed it, the word 'avoid' is the most appropriate here.

51%

BULLET TIME

Space Marine's cheaty time-slowing special move

SPACE MARINE'S POWER meter – built up by doling out multiple hits in succession – is an extremely useful device that temporarily makes you much more powerful and refreshes your health with every melee strike. It's basically the equivalent of a 'win button' and has other handy uses, too. For example, use a firearm during this time and the world around you will slow to a crawl, allowing you to line up a shot with pinpoint accuracy. Use it in conjunction with a sniper rifle and you're basically unstoppable.



Clearing rooms full of enemies soon becomes monotonous.





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Champion Jockey

Weeeee are the champions (eventually)



DETAILS

Publisher
Koei
Developer
Koei
Price
£39.99
Players
1
Genre
Sports
Age Rating
3
Website
tecsmokoei-europe.com
Twitter
@tecsmokoei-europe
Facebook
facebook.com/koeigames



There's *Resistance 3*, *Dead Island*, *Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus*, *FIFA 12*, *PES 2012*, *God Of War Collection: Volume II*, *Bodycount* (alright, maybe not) and then there's this. *Champion Jockey*. A game about horse racing competing with fighting gods, shooting Chimera, destroying colossi and splattering zombies. While other PlayStation 3 owners might be weighing up the merits of the spiked baseball bat versus the hammer as their anti-zombie weapon of choice, *Champion Jockey* asks you equally thrilling questions such as, do you want to use the show whip? Sure. Whatever.

A delve into the tutorials to find out what show whips do, or any of the other words being shouted at you like 'motivation' or 'potential', might yield the answer. Then again, it might not. It's hard to tell because there are so many menus buried within the menus, picking the bit you want – you know, how to race and maybe even *win* – means even finding the right menu is a chore. Let alone which horse type to pick. Or whip to use.

If you dare to race without browsing through the tutorials? Your insolence will

Common occurrence, you're at the back and forced to sprint for an even reasonable finish.



Winning is so difficult, it becomes a huge, looming goal you desperately want to overcome

be smacked back into place by *Champion Jockey*. You'll think you've won a race, suddenly your horse will run out of stamina and slow to a crawl, then you're in last place dragging its corpse over the finish line by the tail. It's not an experience that could be described as friendly and accessible.

Yet figuring out the complexities of *Champion Jockey* isn't the ordeal it should be. It's such a quirky, off-beat game which makes

winning so difficult, it becomes a huge, looming goal you desperately want to overcome. Figuring out the intricacies will take a while and though it's not something made easy by Koei at

all, the feeling of finally managing the horse's stamina, choosing the right whip, avoiding collisions with the other horses and timing the final sprint... well, it's not an experience you'll find in *Resistance 3*.

So we don't hate it. We can't hate the Move integration, which will put a smile on your face or more to the point, whoever's watching you pretend to gallop. We don't hate how difficult it is to understand, nor do we hate how difficult it is to win. We just can't possibly recommend it in The Month Of Many Other Good Games.

Ryan King

VERDICT

It's impossible to score as all that kept us playing (besides being contractually obliged to) was the burning desire to conquer the game's staggering difficulty. Is this good? Is this bad? We think it's okay. So it's getting an okay score.

50%



Or you could try



Resistance 3 This Issue
Because, you know, it's slightly better
than *Champion Jockey*. 88%



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ip
IMAGINE
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Publisher
EA

Developer
EA

Release Date
Out now

Price
£7.99

Players
1

Genre
FPS

Website

www.medalofhonor.com/game/frontline

Twitter

@medalofhonor

Facebook

www.facebook.com/pages/Medal-of-Honor-Frontline/108129872548607

Medal Of Honor: Frontline

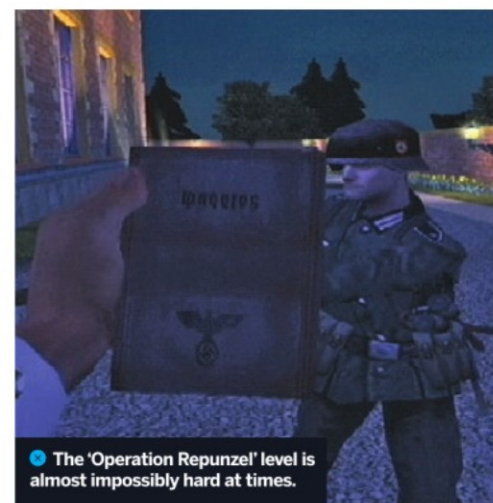
Before Call Of Duty, this was the sharpest shooter on the map. Boy, have times changed...

OH DEAR, TIME really hasn't been kind to *Frontline*. Prior to this HD re-release, our memories of this classic PS2 FPS were joyful ones, recalling an amazing intro that was just like *Saving Private Ryan* and an atmospheric, sprawling juggernaut of an adventure spanning loads of varied levels.

But playing it now, all wistful reminiscences about this game's supposed greatness come crashing down in flames like the Hindenburg. Bundled free with the PS3 *Medal Of Honor* reboot last year, *Frontline* is now available to

buy as a standalone game on the PlayStation Store but, aside from a full quota of Trophies (most of which are easy to Hoover up), there seems little point in buying it.

The game consists of 19 levels, spanning six missions and, played on the standard difficulty, it's still an enjoyable enough romp with plenty of charm and humour (comedy German accents aside). However, if you're attempting to earn the Gold Trophy (and ultimately, your Platinum) for grinding through it on 'Hard' then you have the mutha of all challenges ahead that will test your tolerance to the limit. The main problem is that your weapons don't work against your dreaded enemies – you can line up a perfect headshot and the game flatly refuses to register it. To add to your woes, the enemy can fight back with unnerving accuracy, decimating your health meter from great distances – it's just not fair. This experience completely sullies the game as a whole, which is a shame because apart from the jagged graphics, unresponsive controls and the V-signs to fairness it is still great fun. Perhaps one for retro gamers only.



The 'Operation Repunzel' level is almost impossibly hard at times.



VERDICT

What was once cutting edge is now a jerky, unresponsive mess. But it still has charm and a challenge that will test you to the limit (though perhaps not in a good way). **52%**



Even if you line up the perfect headshot, on the hardest difficulty the game barely registers it – oops, our blood pressure has just skyrocketed again.

DETAILS

Publisher
Hothead Games

Developer
Hothead Games

Release Date
Out now

Price
£7.99

Players
1-2

Genre
Action

Website

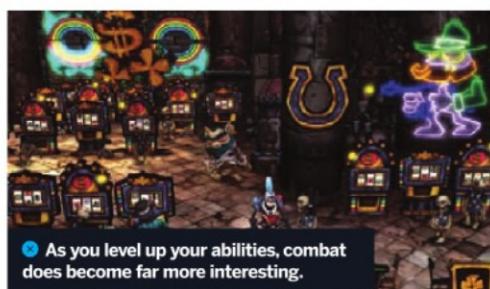
www.thebaconing.com

Twitter

@HotheadGames

Facebook

facebook.com/htheadgames



As you level up your abilities, combat does become far more interesting.



The same unique art style is in place and it still pops off the screen.

The Baconing

So three nuns walk into a bar, right, and they all say 'ouch!' Haha! Haha! Ha. Ha. Ha? Oh

COMEDY IS TRICKY to get right. Games don't often make you laugh out loud and when they do, such is the rarity of the event, you might spin around in the office chair and unsuccessfully relay the joke to everyone else. As might have happened. When someone might have been reviewing *Portal 2*. Who might be called Ian Dransfield. It's all theory, though.

So to see *The Baconing* trade on its humour as its selling point, as happened with *DeathSpank* and *Thongs Of Virtue* before it, is slightly painful. Not because that's a bad idea if the game is funny and occasionally tickles your comedy glands but it's a bad idea if the game is not and fails to tickle, well, anything. The humour here is far, far too forced. You can almost see the strain where it has been violently forced in against its will.

The Baconing also carries on the gameplay of its predecessors, in that you run around using the analogue stick and use the face buttons for different attacks to dispatch your enemies. On Normal, it's a war of attrition tilted in your favour where you don't have to apply too much thought besides checking on your health bar when things get chaotic and ensuring you pop green potions at the right time. It's undemanding stuff.

It's only when you crank the difficulty up that *The Baconing* really shines, as you're forced to use your shield and extreme caution to safely get through the horde of enemies in your path. It never escapes the clumsiness of its controls, which don't lend itself to the precise carve-'em-up hack-'n'-slasher-'n'-looter it could have been but then *The Baconing* never wanted to trade on that. It wanted to trade on its humour. Sadly, given how poorly the gags misfire, it's no laughing matter.



VERDICT

Default difficulty provides mindless fun, tougher difficulty the hardcore challenge. It just needed more focus on getting the combat right to stand up to the task rather than the poor gags. **72%**

Resident Evil 4 HD

Welcome, stranger. Resident Evil 4 is back and more beautiful than ever, but should you buy it at a high price?

DETAILS

Publisher
Capcom
Developer
In-house
Release Date
Out now
Price
£15.99
Players
1
Genre
Action
Website
residentevil.com/rehd
Twitter
@CapcomEuro
Facebook
www.facebook.com/capcommunity

It may be one of the greatest games of all time, but we still can't get over Leon's hair.



QUICK HISTORY LESSON: *Resident Evil 4* is the best action game ever made. In the words of Ron Burgundy, if you don't agree with us, we will fight you. Originally released in 2005 for the GameCube (and later for the PS2) *Resident Evil 4* defined the third-person-shooter genre (no *Uncharted* without it, and that's a fact) and spawned a wave of imitators. Aware that the *Resident Evil* series was as old and creaky as the zombies themselves, Capcom completely reworked 4 for a new generation: the fixed camera angles, item boxes and shuffling zombies were out, replaced with intelligent mobs, unrelenting action and a new third-person, over-the-shoulder camera angle that would be nicked by every action game from here to eternity.

What makes *Resident Evil 4* so good is that there has probably never been a better-paced game in the history of the medium: there is not a single second in the game that seems boring or frustrating. It's that good.

So if you haven't already played it, buy it you fools. For those that have, however, although this HD reissue looks far superior to the GameCube, Wii and PS2 versions there's nothing new here. Capcom has done a passable job bringing the already impressive engine up to date, but those expecting it to compete with most PS3 releases will be disappointed. Which makes the fact that it's on the pricey side a bit harder to swallow, as does the realisation there's no Move support. The Wii version has previously been considered definitive because of motion controls: why can't Capcom offer it here? And, adding insult to injury, is the fact that Mercenaries mode is locked from the start. Poor show, Capcom.

VERDICT

It's still brilliant, and it looks better than it ever has on consoles, but a high price tag and no Move support means old hands should consider their purchase.

93%

You have an objective and a few items to insert into the sequence, but placing them correctly requires some trial and error.



Crazy Machines Elements

Build wacky contraptions from everyday objects and bizarre components in this next-gen instalment of a long-running series

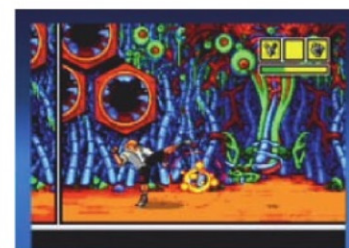
THIS IS A typical 'cause and effect' puzzle game in which you're armed with an inventory of items and have to fathom out how and where they fit into a machine so that when you trigger a sequence of events, the process runs smoothly and efficiently enough for you to complete your objective – which usually involves moving an object to a certain point.

The puzzles start off easy to give you a falsely inflated impression of your intelligence, but then the difficulty is soon cranked up and the time spent stroking your chin trying to work out where to place objects in increasingly growing machines increases.

VERDICT

Good fun and great value, with over 100 different challenges on offer for big-brained boffins to undertake, but the graphics are boring and it does get repetitive.

71%



Comix Zone

Another MegaDrive classic gets dusted down for a retro revival

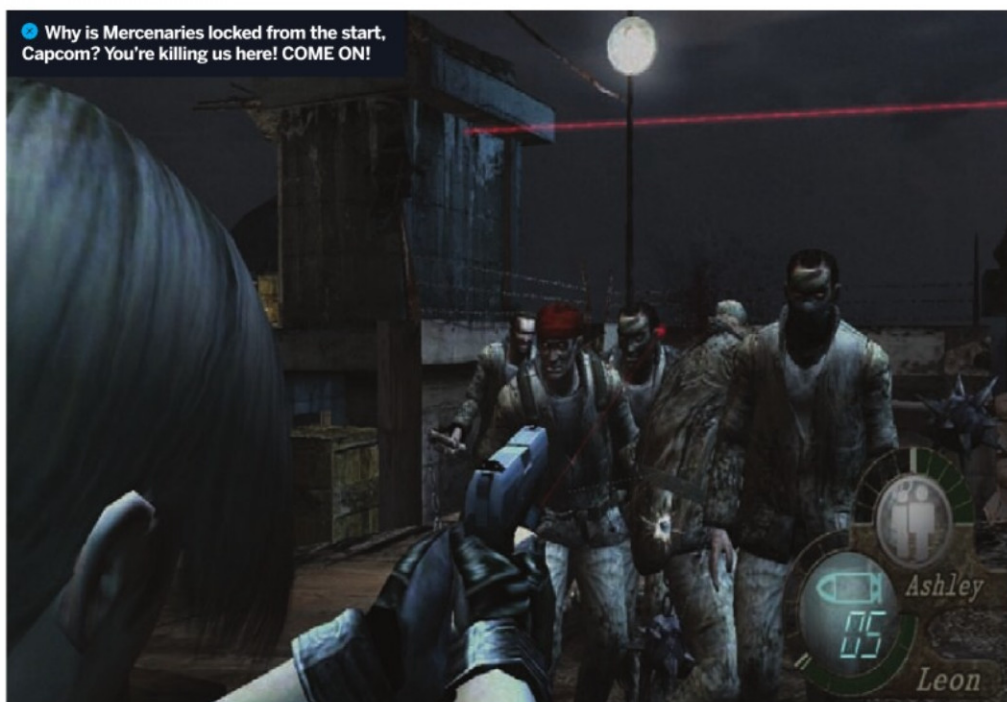
WHEN THIS FIRST appeared on home consoles 16 years ago, it was a brutal bastard of a game that gave you one measly life to contend with waves... well, in this case, pages, of beasts hell-bent on rubbing you out with their five frames of animation.

Playing it now we can see beyond its primitive visuals and appreciate what a stylish and well-crafted variant on the scrolling beat-'em-up theme it was. Sadly, though, the kudos that was awarded for players good enough to beat it is now obsolete thanks to a 'save anywhere' system. Still, at least it allows you to add 12 easy Trophies to your collection.

VERDICT

An enjoyable blast from the past, but with no new features or enhancements you'd be better off buying this as part of the Sega MegaDrive Collection.

62%



UNDER THE INFLUENCE... The games that changed it all



GTA: San Andreas

- Release date October 2004 • Publisher Rockstar Games
- Developer Rockstar North • Games it influenced Every game, ever. After 2004



• No Billy Jean here: the opening is all about the 'hood.



• And you thought he was dead. And white.



• Those people who swam in their suits or vests should be ashamed of themselves.



WE HATE SAN Andreas. Hate it. Why? Because it made every open-world game that came after it, including its own sequel, seem sparse and empty, devoid of things to do, planes to jump out of, gangs to, er, bang. You get the picture.

Released late 2004 (in October, just two weeks before *Halo 2* and *Half-Life 2*, ridiculously) to outrageous hype, *San Andreas* didn't disappoint. Taking everything that made the previous PS2-era games fun and expanding on it exponentially, *San Andreas* presented you with an entire state to play around in, rather than a piddling city.

While this may have had a detrimental effect on the graphics, with hideous textures and pop-

San Andreas presented you with an entire state to play around in, rather than a piddling city

in somewhat marring the experience, it didn't really matter.

After all, Rockstar North had given you an entire world to explore, and more importantly, they had populated it with things to do, which is something most developers of open-world games seem to forget.

Triathlons? Parachutes? Actual, proper aircraft? Car-modding, base-jumping, dual-wielding? Eating, working out, getting tattoos? Jumping off Mt Chiliad on a mountain bike, stealing a hidden 747, buying up most of California's real estate? Taking on Samuel L Jackson's crooked cop in the game's massive storyline? It's essentially everything that *Play* gets up to in its spare time, now available to

everyone without the pesky consequences. (Well, apart from that whole Hot Coffee thing.)

It wasn't just how many elements Rockstar North poured into the game, however, it was how expertly they all meshed together. The fictional state of *San Andreas* didn't just feel like a playground, as previous large-scale open worlds such as *True Crime* had done.

Instead, thanks to the time-day system and the sheer wealth of ancillary shenanigans to get up to, *San Andreas* felt as much like an RPG-lite as it did a sandbox game. We're not afraid to admit that here at *Play* we had very different systems for our versions of CJ.

Steve's incarnation wouldn't do missions at night, and insisted on doing triathlons on Sunday. In swim shorts. Ian's was fat but kept with the latest trends by constantly changing his hair, and felt lonely if he didn't have a posse of homies with him at all times.

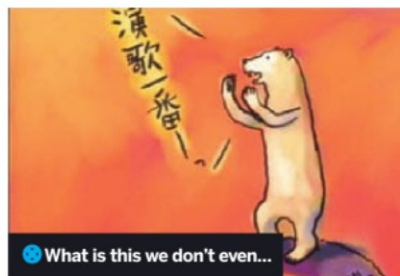
One *Play* member, who wishes not to be named, was an all-out guns-blazing mutha with no respect for the law and a strong desire to bet all of his money at

the local bookies. Which is pretty much the best descriptor of them you could ever hope for.

It's this sort of dedication that sums up just how involving *San Andreas*'s world was to those who played it. Granted, the early stages of the game were a grind, as you attempted to pull CJ out from abject poverty, and the 'gangsta' theme rubbed many up the wrong way after *Vice City*'s cool Miami Vibe. After a few hours, though, when you were flying around in the Learjet and rocking more bling than P Diddy playing Mr T in a music video directed by Hype Williams, it all made sense. Beautiful, beautiful sense.

WHAT WE SAID: Issue 123 • 99%
Make no mistake, this is truly awesome.

YOU NEVER PLAYED THIS



Kuma Uta

- Release date November 2003
- Publisher Sony • Developer MuuMuu

LISTEN TO US now: if the last thing you do in your life is go onto YouTube and type in 'Kuma Uta', then you will die a happy man/woman.

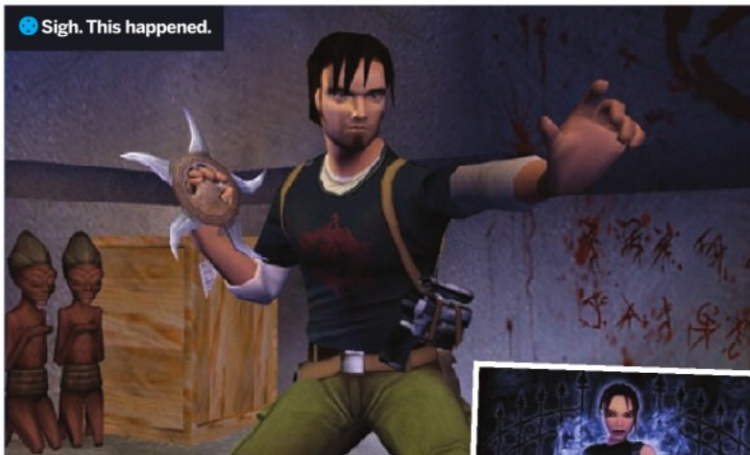
Kuma Uta is a PlayStation 2 game featuring singing, which by itself isn't too revelatory. When you factor in that its main attraction is an alien polar bear that sings in Japanese and wears a suit, however, things get suitably mental.

And if there was one word to sum up *Kuma Uta*, mental is it. As you watch the bear, wearing a smoking jacket and blurting out something incomprehensible in Japanese as backgrounds made out of madness scroll behind him,

it's difficult not to think you're in a Dennis Hopper acid-flashback circa 1979.

We haven't played it but just watching the videos gave us hope that videogames could be something more than just hours of men shooting or scoring themselves into pieces.

Kuma Uta dares to be different (or the same, if you have any experience of the concept of 'Japan') and its reward is that it's obviously brilliant. Just look at it. Western developers – you are now on notice. If you don't come up with something as mind-bendingly ace as this in the next year, you're all out of your jobs. Deal with it.

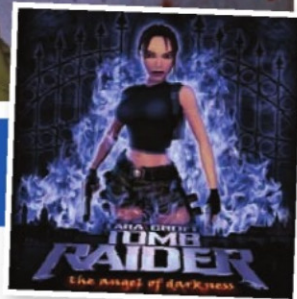


WE COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT...

Tomb Raider: Angel Of Darkness

IF YOU WERE a PlayStation 2 owner in 2000, you were probably excited about two things: the first was that you owned a PS2, making you one of the hippest people in the universe, and the other was that there was totally a new *Tomb Raider* coming out for it and it was going to be ruddy brilliant.

Sadly, what we got was a try-hard mess of a game: that tried to be moody and ended up being emo, tried to be like *The Matrix* and ended up being more *Bulletproof Monk*. Borderline broken and with no tombs to explore, this was ass.



VALUE FOR MONEY ACCORDING TO PLAYSTATION

BECAUSE WHO DOESN'T think that \$599 is too much money to spend on a console? Not Ken Kutaragi, who famously lamented the fact that the console should actually cost more money.



RETRO GAMES WE SAID WE WANT TO PLAY AGAIN BUT PROBABLY WON'T



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

WHEN THIS FIRST came out nu-metal was at its zenith, extreme sports were still cool and Fred Durst was still a real person. Sadly, those days have passed, and while *Pro Skater 2* is still a good game we're not sure we can go back to that world.



Medal Of Honor: Frontline

IT'S JUST LIKE being there, man. You don't know because you weren't there, man. Well, we were, and yes it was just like being there. We don't want to go back, though, because war is wrong. And in *Frontline's* case, really bloody ugly now.



Cool Boarders 2

SO WHAT IF the N64 got the absolutely brilliant *1080: TenEighty Snowboarding*? We were already covered with the equally excellent – okay, not really – *Cool Boarders 2*. Which is still pretty, er, cool but we just can't see ourselves playing it again, ever.



Deus Ex

DESPITE THE FACT that it's absolutely brilliant, there's no way we're going back to the original *Deus Ex*. Well, not on PS2 anyway: we might do on PC, with mods and all that sass. But we've got *Human Revolution* to play now, so even that might not happen. We're so confused.

A BLUFFER'S GUIDE TO RESISTANCE 3'S WEAPONS

While most first-person shooters are content to simply put a real gun into the main character's hands and call it a day, Insomniac Games is a little bit more creative than that. Whether it's imaginative alien technology or modified human ordinance, *Resistance* has always had a great selection of weapons, and *Resistance 3* is no different.

Here, we run down *Resistance 3*'s imaginative death-dealers for your pleasure, and give you some basic tips on the best way to use them.



SLEDGEHAMMER

As basic as it gets, the Sledgehammer is easy to use: swing it into someone's skull, laugh like a psycho, repeat to fade. **R2** brings the pain with a devastating overhead smash. Not recommended outside of the levels that require you to use it (you'll know it when you get there), but feel free to smash your way through the rest of the game for added challenge. You'll certainly earn our respect, that's for sure.



HE .44 MAGNUM

If your day hasn't been made yet, give this bad boy a whirl. Looking like a standard revolver, the HE boasts an alternate fire that enables you to explode any armed rounds fired into enemies or scenery. Great for taking out multiple enemies, this is also effective when shooting the armour plating off the Brutes, as the explosion means you don't have to be as accurate.

It's possible to forget this gun as the game progresses and you unlock stronger, more accurate weapons, but the HE is great for showing off and creating fireworks of your foes with the alternate fire. Use it if you want to get the Trophy Grasshopper Club: simply fire the round into a non-lethal spot on a Longleg, wait until he jumps and make sure he never lands with **R2**.



BULLSEYE

A *Resistance* staple, the Bullseye is a fast-firing, medium-power weapon that is a dependable last resort. It's also brilliant for crowd control and shooting out power lines. Standard fire is your typical submachine gun, but **R2** fires out a tag that, when stuck on an enemy, redirects all subsequent rounds towards it. It's one of the first weapons you get, so you'll probably unlock both upgrades: explosive rounds at level 2 and explosive tags (that can hit multiple targets) at level 3.

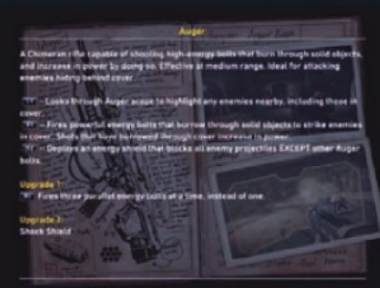
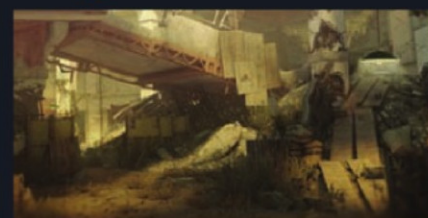
You'll unlock more powerful weapons, but the Bullseye is as dependable as they come.



DEADEYE

New to the series, it's a sniper rifle with a nifty sideline in proton-charged shots (capable of taking out multiple enemies). You shouldn't need much telling on how to use this. That said, don't try and quickscope with it (pulling **L1** and **R1** together to get a quick and accurate shot off) and be aware that the upgraded Marksman weapon has a sight as well. It's less powerful, but you can get more shots off with it.

However, if you're in a sniping situation and you absolutely, definitely have to make that first shot count, the Deadeye is your weapon.



AUGER

Another returnee, the Auger is a staple of the Chimera army and a right pain in the ass to boot if you're caught in its way. A great scout weapon (it can see, and fire, through walls), use the standard fire from deep cover – in a building, behind multiple layers of geometry – as the round gets more powerful the more matter it passes through. Upgrade it enough and you can also fire three rounds at a time. Not great when used up close, nevertheless the Auger has a great secondary ability: **R2** deploys a shield that only Auger rounds can pass through. Great for forming mobile defensive positions on some of the later stages, when enemy snipers will be swarming like flies.



ATOMISER

A new addition, the Atomiser is a great crowd control weapon and even better for laying traps. Use the primary fire for when enemies are swarming you, or on enemy types like the Steelhead. The secondary fire is great when making your retreat or running and gunning: deploy it behind you and watch your foes get sucked into a whirling vortex of death. Especially useful in Mt Pleasant and the latter New York stages.



CRYOGUN

Attention *Duke Nukem Forever*: this is how you do a freeze gun. The Cryogun is one of the best guns in the game, allowing you to turn on-rushing enemies or clusters of foes into popsicles, and then blast 'em into pieces with **R2**. Brilliant against the Grims and even better when upgraded, the Cryogun should become a staple of your arsenal. Use it whenever three or more enemies are converging, but don't forget that the knock-down, stun effect secondary has a far larger range than you'd think, giving you vital time to switch to another weapon or throw a grenade.



MUTATOR

Awww yeah. The newly-minted Mutator is one of the most grotesque weapons in the game, and therefore one of the most satisfying. A handmade weapon given to Capelli later on in his journey, use the Mutator against (begin spoiler!) human targets on the prison level (end spoiler) to almost instantly incapacitate them. Don't waste your time with the stun effects of the alternate fire unless you're fully levelled: you may as well kill your foes in the same time it takes to stun them all, and use the puppet master upgrade to coerce Chimera foes into attacking each other.



ROSSMORE

Like the HE .44, the Rossmore looks like a standard human weapon (in this case a shotgun) until you fire it. Brilliant for levels such as the St Louis boat ride or Mt Pleasance, the Rossmore should also be used to take out the Leapers. Obviously, this is best used at close range, but the concussion grenade alternate fire is useful for knocking back mid-range foes. It becomes rather redundant later on but persist with it and you'll get both arsonist grenades and incendiary rounds, great for controlling where your enemy can and can't attack you from.



MARKSMAN

Fancy yourself as a bit of a sniper, but also want at least some close-combat capability should things get hairy? The Marksman is your weapon: when upgraded and fitted with the scope, use it as a substitute for the sniper rifle. Great for taking out flying Chimera Scout drones (especially those that provide an overshield for advancing troops), secondary fire also deploys a mini turret that can provide essential damage to troops threatening to overrun your position.

Tactically, the Marksman is very useful in the latter stages of the game to take out power lines and headshot basic Chimera troops from cover.



M5A2 CARBINE

Solid, dependable, classic. The M5A2 Carbine is an excellent suppression weapon, although watch your trigger finger. As Hicks once said: short, controlled bursts. An underslung grenade launcher is incredibly useful for putting the hurt on particularly tough enemies or large groups of bad guys, and we found that the M5A2 Carbine was especially great when taking out the groups of Wardens that assault Joe Capelli's train. It's an all-round weapon, basically, but is great for having on quick select if only for the grenade launcher.



WILDFIRE

Replacing the LAARK as R3's rocket launcher, the Wildfire will come to be one of your most trusted weapons. Useful in pretty much all scenarios that don't include the enemy standing right next to you, use **L1** to lock onto jeeps, dropships and so on and lay down the hurt with **R1**. For infantry, **R2** is what you need: fire it into the sky, and when it's above the Chimera hit **R2** again to split it into yet more rockets for maximum damage.

INCOMING!

Grenades ahoy



Shrapnel grenade

Your standard frag, this is the all-rounder. Great for taking out groups or entrenched Chimera, use this against Auger troops hiding behind shields, the pansies.



EMP grenade

Use this to knock enemy shields out, and try not to get it confused in the heat of battle with the Hedgehog grenade. It won't end well either way.



Molotov cocktail

If you don't know what this is then you've obviously not watched the news in some time. Use it for crowd control or when accuracy isn't needed or guaranteed.



Hedgehog

Seen *Double Team*, with Van Damme? Where Mickey Rourke gets killed by a mine that leaps into the air when touched and explodes? Yep. Use it to cover exits, but remember it can hurt you too.





Insidious

PRICE: £10.99 **SOUND:** DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 **DIRECTOR:** James Wan
STARRING: Patrick Wilson, Rose Byrne, Lin Shaye

DIRECTOR JAMES WAN and writer Leigh Whannell are best known for their work on *Saw*, but there's more to respect in this more retro-styled ghost story than there is in films about hacking off your own foot. For the first two-thirds of the film Wan proves himself to be very capable at slow-burn horror. Unfortunately the film soon

descends into farce. Patrick Wilson's acting deteriorates as the narrative grows more absurd, and the monsters that were glimpsed briefly earlier lose their ability to frighten when revealed in full. It's a disappointing third act, particularly as it follows an hour of genuinely good horror.

RATING: ★★★★★



Arthur

PRICE: £15.99 **SOUND:** DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 **DIRECTOR:** Jason Winer
STARRING: Russell Brand, Helen Mirren, Jennifer Garner

REMEMBER ARTHUR, THE whimsical Dudley Moore comedy from 1981? If you don't then you're making us feel old. This Russell Brand remake is either infinitely funnier or not as funny in the slightest, mostly depending on how old you are and your opinion on Brand. We fall somewhere in the middle. The film has its moments, and Brand manages to be likeable if not loveable in the role.

However we were expecting more from the script given that it was written by Peter Baynham, the man responsible for *Borat*, *I'm Alan Partridge* and *Brass Eye*. None of the wit or satire from those makes it into *Arthur*, which feels more a case of 'look at Russel Brand being Russel Brand' rather than a remake created with genuine love of the original.

RATING: ★★★★★



Star Wars: The Complete Saga

PRICE: £67.49 **SOUND:** DTS-HD Master Audio 6.1 **DIRECTOR:** Various
STARRING: Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher, Harrison Ford

STAR WARS IS the story of a young space hamster named George who shoots himself out of a cannon to the farthest reaches of space in an attempt to become a galaxy wizard. Okay, that clearly isn't the plot of *Star Wars* but it would surely be insulting to your intelligence if we described the actual story. This is approximately the

5 millionth re-release of the *Star Wars* films, but this time you get them in all their high-definition glory. Should you buy it? Not if you want to wait for the 3D versions, which start releasing next year. There are tons of special features, though, which hardcore *Star Wars* fans will adore.

RATING: ★★★★★



● Kenneth Branagh may seem like an odd choice for a director, but the man knows Shakespeare, and there's definitely something of *The Bard's* touch to *Thor's* family dynamics.

Thor

Is Thor Asgard as Iron Man? Geddit?



PRICE: £16.99 **SOUND:** DTS-HD Master Audio 7.1 **DIRECTOR:** Kenneth Branagh
STARRING: Chris Hemsworth, Anthony Hopkins, Natalie Portman

It's not quite as easy to accept the exploits of Tony Stark or Bruce Banner after a viewing of *Thor*. Whereas they were once contained adventures about

scientists fighting personal battles, we now know those movies were *actually* occurring within the context of a galaxy that is ruled by a bunch of Norse deities who live in what looks like the concourse for *Mario Kart's* Rainbow Road.

Such an outlandish and peculiar concept must have been difficult for Marvel to translate onto the big screen – Lord knows Warner Bros. had a difficult time with a similar feat in *Green Lantern* – and the inherent difficulties of doing just that are evident in the first 30 minutes of the film. The audience is plunged into a lengthy expository sequence in which Thor and his brother Loki (Tom Hiddleston) battle an interstellar race of Frost Giants, before Thor's exasperated father Odin (Anthony Hopkins) banishes his son from Asgard. It all feels a bit much.

But despite the silly costumes, huge, golden sets, and dialogue that constantly threatens a high score on the cheese-o-meter, *Thor* still manages to avoid feeling unintentionally hilarious. It's big budget enough to get away with it, and plays the action and characters straight, narrowly avoiding unwelcome comparisons to the likes of *Flash Gordon*.

This absence of awkward corniness is largely thanks to the tonal shift that occurs when Thor is banished to Earth. The film transforms from

Shakespeare in space to a fish-out-of-water tale, Chris Hemsworth proving he's not just good at action and showing off his washboard abs but that he's pretty good at comedy, too. Whether it's hurling mugs of coffee in small-town diners or attempting to buy horses at a pet shop, watching the blustering God Of Thunder attempt to make his way around backwater New Mexico is the source of the film's best laughs. Unfortunately, Hemsworth's relationship with astrophysicist Jane (Natalie Portman) feels shoehorned into the script, and comes across as somewhat implausible as a result.

It's not the only problem with *Thor*. The set pieces lack the bombast and imagination of other Marvel movies, and at two hours long the story of the Odinson drags on a little too long, potentially leaving you with a Thor bum (sorry... couldn't help ourselves).

But despite these letdowns the sense of fun that pervades *Thor* is infectious. It's difficult not to be pulled in by the glitzy special effects and to enjoy the company of the larger-than-life characters. It's silly, sure, but charming, too, and the fact that you're laughing *with* it rather than *at* it is a feat worthy of the gods themselves.

VERDICT

The effects look great in 3D and there's some fun comedy, but, like *Iron Man 2*, this feels like a trailer for something bigger and better. We look forward to seeing Hemsworth in *Avengers* to see how his character plays off a larger and more interesting cast.

RATING: ★★★★★

Movies that should be videogames



From Dusk Till Dawn

TAKE A LOOK at that image up there and tell us it doesn't look like one of the movie posters for a *Left 4 Dead* campaign. 'From Dusk Till Dawn' would be the title... 'They're mean motherf**kin' servants of God'.

From Dusk Till Dawn is great for many reasons – lines like that above;

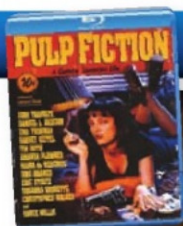
the characters; the fact that it goes from crime movie to vampire flick at the drop of a hat. It's a silly film played completely straight, and probably the best collaboration between Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez.

From Dusk Till Dawn was a smorgasbord of violence occurring

within Titty Twister, a strip club built on top of an ancient Aztec ruin. In our game players would explore the temple, each equipped with weapons such as super soakers filled with holy water, jackhammers affixed with wooden stakes and, of course, Sex Machine's codpiece revolver.

Terrible videogame movie of the month

THE FIRST TIME we saw *Hitman* we got to the scene in which Olyphant jumps through a window and sees two kids playing the *Hitman* game. We then turned it off to do something that wasn't a massive waste of our lives.



Classic Blu-ray Fantastic Blu-rays you need to have in your collection

#9 Pulp Fiction

Price: £15.99 **Sound:** DTS-HD Master Audio 5.1 **Director:** Quentin Tarantino **Starring:** John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman

THERE'S A LOT about *Pulp Fiction* that makes us never want to watch it again – people's heads exploding, hypodermic needles being plunged into chests, *that* scene with Zed. But we'll sit through all of that in the name of enjoying what was arguably one of the best movies to have come out of the Nineties.

This was when Quentin Tarantino was at the top of his game, not parodying himself in titles like *Kill Bill* or creating overly indulgent films like *Inglourious Basterds*, but making ultra-cool, eclectic cinema that homaged the movies of the Seventies he'd watched during his time as a video store clerk.

The mobsters and small-time criminals in *Pulp Fiction* are the lowest of the low, but you can't help but like them, such is the quality of Tarantino's script and its blacker-than-black comedy. Their intertwining, non-chronological narratives are compelling, hilarious, frightening and dangerous, each told with a masterful touch. And even if you find the more grotesque scenes too hard to watch, there are many more moments of pure classic cinema – Honey-Bunny and Pumpkin; the dance in Jack Rabbit Slims; Christopher Walken's soliloquy; *that* speech. Utter brilliance in every way.

Videogames we never want to see made into movies



Shadow Of The Colossus

THERE WAS SOME noise about this actually occurring a few months back, but the plans to make a movie have quietened down as of late. We hope it stays that way – we want this game remembered for its stark beauty, not because of a crass Hollywood remake.



Braid

WE CAN JUST imagine the poster for a *Braid* movie now. Brad Pitt, dressed up in a schoolboy's outfit, bursting out the face of a clock. "It's TIME to kick some ass" the tagline would read for this Tony Scott-directed take on Jonathan Blow's miniature masterpiece. Erm... NO THANKS, not for us.



Call Of Duty

THE THOUGHT OF a film based in the world of *Call Of Duty* sends shivers down our spine. Perhaps it's because *Call Of Duty* is already so influenced by contemporary cinema that any film based on the series would be nothing more than an inane compilation of every military movie cliché ever conceived.



Tetris

GIVEN THAT THERE has just been a movie made about the Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots toy named *Red Steel* we are worried what Hollywood might turn its eye to next. What would it do after its explosive take on *Tetris*? *Pong: The Movie*?

PLAY#x PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

GAME UNDER

Stock photography, fictitious stories, real lives...

Bournemouth: city of glory.



A place where your dreams can come true.



Where the beer flows like wine.



Where... oh, wait - we got the images mixed up.



That's better. Bournemouth: city of glory...



PS3 LISTING



game	issue	score
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.		
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Single-player is fairly impressive but take it online and it's bordering on genius. This is quite possibly the best shooter on PS3 today.		
Bayonetta*	187	93%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BlackSite	163	43%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Borderlands	185	80%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters.		
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%

game	issue	score
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine*	204	48%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Damnation	181	38%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.		
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
As good as it was when we reviewed it on import, but with a better translation and it's also available here. One of PS3's best games.		
Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Worries: unfounded. Fun: lots of it. True Deus Ex experience: confirmed. Boss battles: bloody awful.		
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
DiRT 3	206	85%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
It's just like playing Guitar Hero for the first time all over again, although DJ Hero is slightly more expensive.		
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%

game	issue	score
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
F1 2010	197	86%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.		
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
Two of the greatest PS2 action games of all time come together at a bargain price. Essential purchase.		
God Of War III	190	88%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Two fine expansions bundled together and without the need for GTA IV to play them. What more could you want.		
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero III is another great rhythm-action beast, sure to delight fans and newcomers alike. So, grab a guitar and rock out!		
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter: The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
It will certainly split opinion, but we absolutely love it. A valuable addition to the wonderful world of gaming.		
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	PS3	52%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	PS3	63%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	PS3	91%
Driver: San Francisco	PS3	68%
Madden NFL 12	PS3	85%
Rugby World Cup 2011	PS3	49%
Limbo	PSN	90%
Section 8: Prejudice	PSN	80%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	PSN	92%

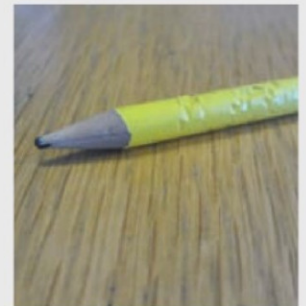
game	issue	score
Homefront	203	69%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
 Sony has proven that it has a PlayStation platform capable of supporting a truly world-class FPS. Best graphics ever.		
Killzone 3	202	80%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
L.A. Noire	206	91%
 Not perfect but Rockstar's new IP introduces pioneering facial-capture technology and interesting gameplay.		
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
 An amazing game and something to get involved with even if you can't create your own stuff.		
Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
LOTR: Conquest	175	52%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
 Why the hell are you reading this when you should be playing Mass Effect 2 instead? GO GO GO.		
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%

game	issue	score
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
 Not the final Metal Gear Solid game after all then. Still brilliant though, and still largely incomprehensible.		
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
 A questionable single-player mode is rendered null and void by the best multiplayer we've ever played.		
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
 The best kart racer by far on the PlayStation 3, but combined with incredible levels of creativity. If you love LBP you'll love this, too.		
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
Moto GP 10/11	204	64%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
MX Vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
nail'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
 Hot Pursuit is one of the best arcade racers of all time - pure, unadulterated bliss in game form.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
Nier	192	54%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
POTC: At World's End	154	48%

game	issue	score
Portal 2	205	95%
 Another exceptional realisation from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.		
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
 Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
 With its impressive set pieces and glorious multiplayer mode, Resistance 2 is one of the best FPSs on the PS3.		
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
 With the incredible tracklist, tweaked engine, and new modes, this is easily the best rhythm-action game currently available.		
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
 Simply the best rally game on the PS3. Unless simulation is your bag then you'll want to go for Colin McRae. Not much in it, really.		
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
ShellShock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
Simpsons Game	160	82%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%

*denotes import review

PLAY'S DIARY



DAY 4 In the normal duty of creating the magazine it is discovered that Play's beloved pencil is suffering from serious chew-inflicted injuries. The perpetrator of the crime is not known, but Ian was seen licking his wood-covered, sharp teeth. Suspicion rises.



DAY 12 Just over a week later it becomes abundantly clear these injuries are worse than initially thought, and medical help is brought in. An emergency sharpening is ruled out, with the doctor telling Team Play to make her 'as comfortable as possible'.

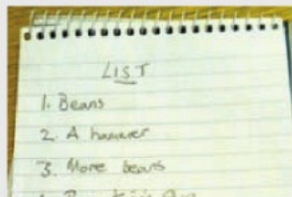


DAY 23 Cast from this mortal coil, the poor pencil, in the prime of her life, succumbs to her catastrophic injuries. The service is a quick one, but not without emotion. Tears are shed by the team with such violent emotion it literally makes people die of sadness.



DAY 29 A miracle! Somehow, some way, the pencil has been resurrected. She still suffers the scars of many a battle/chew, but it turns out the last of her graphite breaths were not in fact that. We're worried voodoo was involved, however.

Making a list vs Checking it twice



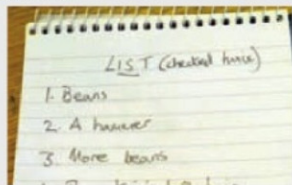
MAKING A LIST

Lists aren't just the preserve of girls, people with any kind of real, responsible job and your mother (NOTE: mother is different from girls, SHE IS). No, it seems that even human beings sometimes make lists in order to be sure they know what to buy, or what to take with them somewhere, or who they're going to ki... kiss. Yes. A 'kissing' list, with all of our worst enemies on it... hmm.

Anyway, lists are massively useful because they make sure our notoriously squidgy and stupid brains don't forget the things they always go and bloody well forget. Also, when you're writing them – and if you're feeling that way – you can decorate lists with fun things, like unicorns, Unicorn or the health food store in Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Unicorn.

The choice literally is yours. You can even *not* draw something if you don't want to. It's brilliant.

List/10



CHECKING IT TWICE

Whereas lists may be the preserve of few, checking it twice is the preserve of even fewer... er. Let's *list* who does it (ha!): Santa Claus, your mum, people who are very anal/ careful. So yeah, about three people in the whole world. But what are the benefits of checking said list twice? Well aside from being able to discover who is naughty and who is oppo-naughty ('nice', in the common parlance of our times), checking it twice allows people to make sure they have written down everything they meant to write down. Effectively it's subbing in real life, just like Dan does *every single day*.

Quick example: we once wrote a list, with one of the items being "a pumpkin" – on checking it twice we realised we had written this. The crazy thing is, we didn't mean to write this! What are the odds? Oh, crazy days. We miss those days.

Che-check/10

game	issue	score
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Soul Calibur IV	169	94%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Just beating <i>Blur</i> to the chequered flag, <i>Split/Second</i> is a wonderfully intense racing game in the <i>Burnout</i> mould.		
Sports Champions	196	83%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
The fact that you're buying a lot of stuff you've probably bought already is the only drawback to what is the best fighter ever made.		
Tekken 6	184	94%
There are flaws that hurt the experience, but nothing, <i>nothing</i> , stops <i>Tekken 6</i> from being an intense, tactical and brilliant fighting game.		
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
The Club	163	80%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
This proves once and for all that Western RPGs are better than Japanese ones! Sort of. Whatever, <i>Oblivion</i> is an awesome game.		
The Fight	199	42%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The Orange Box	161	93%
The Saboteur	187	67%
The Shoot	199	76%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%

game	issue	score
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA EURO 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
Undisputed is gorgeous to look at, it's incredibly deep, and it's one of the most addictive fighters we've played in ages.		
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Among Thieves has proven itself to be a real work of class. It's one of the best games in recent years.		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
A brilliant surprise from the developer of <i>Bayonetta</i> and easily one of the best games we've played in 2010.		
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of Wrestlemania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown Vs Raw 2011	199	63%
X-Blades	178	54%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yoostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%

PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Classic, frantic and utterly brilliant arcade action from Sega. A fine example of what the company is best known for.		
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%

game	issue	score
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
We had to wait quite a while, but time is what we have plenty of both with and for <i>Braid</i> . Simply brilliant.		
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
It doesn't have <i>MW2</i> 's polish but it's a great game both as a slice of history and in its own right.		
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	168	70%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer Red Alert 3 Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
This is yet another beautiful, cute and high-class puzzler on the PSN that works perfectly and is a joy to play.		
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Digger HD	186	52%
Diner Dash	190	66%
Driver	171	90%
Droplitz	184	91%
<i>Droplitz</i> is a superb puzzler that blends <i>Rez</i> -style layers of music, pipes and dials to create one of the most satisfying puzzlers in years.		
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome II	202	83%
echochrome	169	85%
Elefunk	170	45%
Explodemon	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
This scrolling-fighter classic from 1989 makes an almost flawless appearance on PSN. Stick it on your download list.		
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
Even after all these years it still holds up. In fact, our mark seems to have gone up 3% since 1997.		
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
A truly engaging RPG – if you've never experienced the game before then make sure this is the next thing you download.		
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Never gets the love it deserves, but this PSN release gives you the chance to experience Square Enix's refreshing RPG all over again.		
Flight Control HD	198	85%

game	issue	score
Flock!	179	70%
f!Ow	151	90%
Another 90% game for the PS3, another lesson in simple, addictive gameplay. f!Ow is an innovative title available on the Network.		
Flower	176	85%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
GT! Club+	174	72%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperballoid HD	188	70%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Simply put, Joe Danger is one of the best games you'll currently find on the PSN. Buy it. Buy it now.		
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
Lara is back to her best in The Guardian Of Light. Tomb Raider fans will love it and for just £9.99 everyone else should, too.		
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Limbo	209	90%
We had to wait a while, but just like with Braid it in no way negatively impacts the quality of what is just that – a quality experience.		
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
While it looks rather rough now, the game itself remains a real high point in the franchise. Simply essential.		
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: LeChuck's Revenge Special Edition	195	94%
The HD remake of arguably the best game in the Monkey Island series is a more than welcome addition to the PSN.		
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
Outland	207	72%

game	issue	score
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Bold, bright, insanely addictive – this re-imagining of the retro classic is an essential addition to anybody's PSN library.		
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
So addictive it should come with some sort of government warning. Terrific value for money and a superb little puzzle game.		
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
If you like challenges, shooting, pixels and junk, then this combines all four of those and adds in several splashes of style as well.		
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Clever, funny and taxing in all the right ways, we're very happy that the Freelance Police are on PlayStation 3.		
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
This is even better than the first episode due to the fact it has better puzzles and even funnier dialogue.		
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic 4: Episode One	199	82%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
The best version of one of the best fighting games ever released, or something. We don't know, mainly because Ryan isn't writing this.		
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Telltale Games' excellent modern addition to the Monkey Island franchise finally sees the light of day on PSN. Go pick it up.		
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%

game	issue	score
The Last Guy	171	91%
Snake meets Pac-Man meets GoogleMaps. The Last Guy is yet another innovative and compelling addition to the PSN's line-up.		
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
The Secret Of Monkey Island Special Edition	195	92%
LucasArts' classic point-and-click adventure gets an HD makeover and will hopefully be the first of many classics heading to PSN.		
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotal: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Under Siege	207	71%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
WipEout	01	89%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Worms	179	91%
There's a reason Worms is still going strong, and that's because people never get tired of its fun personality and addictive gameplay.		
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yar's Revenge	206	57%
Zuma	182	78%

PSP mini LISTING

A Space Shooter For Two Bucks	202	55%
Alien Havoc	186	68%
Angry Birds	202	93%
Flinging birds at stuff for four times the price of the original in a less-functional fashion than before has never been so much fun.		
Bloons	186	65%
Brainpipe	186	70%
BreakQuest	186	45%
Edge	202	85%
Field Runners	186	85%
Fortix	186	57%
Funky Punch	186	49%
Hero Of Sparta	186	57%
I Must Run!	202	70%
Kahoots	186	88%
NOVA: Near Orbit Vanguard Alliance	202	63%
Pinball Fantasies	186	90%
Pinball Fantasies was originally released on the Amiga and features four tables and some excellent pinball gaming.		
Puzzle Scape	186	75%
Sky Force	202	68%
Tetris	186	93%
How it is possible to make Tetris feel so fresh and so much fun again we don't know, but it's managed here.		
Vampire	186	67%
Who's That Flying?!	202	64%

PSP LISTING

300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%

GAMING CLICHÉS & VIDEOGAME LOGIC CRATES

IT'S HARD TO believe we've done almost 20 cliché and gaming logic entries and we've never done crates. Barrels, yes. Crates? No. All of that changes today as we break out our crowbars and beat down the wooden walls around us, showing the world our delicious treats inside. Yes, we're mixing our crate metaphor with a piñata one. And we're not even sorry.



Anyway, crates seem to be in pretty much 90 per cent of all games ever made. Even if a game came out called 'In This Game There Are No Crates', there would – most likely – be crates in it. It would be funny if it wasn't so annoying, but it's not even annoying because we're so accustomed to seeing the bloody things everywhere.



While we can apply the simple logic that crates are easy to cr(e)ate in games and they act as acceptable, militarily themed filler in many of the environments our games take place, it doesn't stop it from being annoying that they're everywhere. Obviously Half-Life was one of the main perpetrators back in the day, but crates were around a long time before that.



There's such a legacy behind the cubic bastards that it's hard to imagine a world without them. Plus it's not like they really have a bad effect on the world around us. They contain delicious goodies, they help us reach places we couldn't before and – if you don't like them – you tend to be able to beat them to death. Crates: gr(e)ate(s).



PSN'S HIDDEN GEMS

THIS MONTH: SUPER STARDUST HD

74%, Play 155

WE MAY BE breaking our own rules here, as with the number of updates and spin-offs *Super Stardust HD* has received over the years it's clear it's not that much of a hidden gem when it comes to Sony's view on things.



Still, we're going to put it in this section because we gave it 74% back in the day, and we sort of want to atone for our sins. Not by changing the score, obviously – that would be insanity of the highest order.



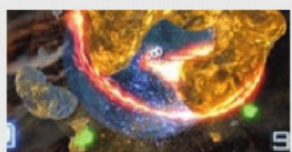
Instead we just want to point out that it is a good game and is definitely worth downloading and playing until your eyes (and thumbs) start bleeding everywhere. Not that there's any guarantee that will happen, you must understand.



The 3D update of the game was one of the best examples of the third dimension Sony threw at us and the upcoming Vita version looks to be both bloody pretty and keeping things as painfully addictive as they were before.



So yes – we stand by 74% and will rarely if ever change our scores. But we're not above admitting that *SSHHD* is worth playing a bit more than its scoreline might suggest. Doesn't mean we were wrong though. IT DOESN'T.



game	issue	score
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bomberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
Crisis Core – Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia 012 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
Bar some combat control issues, <i>GTA: Chinatown Wars</i> has perfectly translated to the PSP. It's a must-have game.		
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Rising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Hellboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman!		
What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%

*denotes import review

game	issue	score
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
Refined in certain areas and slightly worse in Create mode but still a fantastic addition to PSP's lineup.		
LocoRoco	143	94%
We called this the definitive PSP title in our review, and it is a game that no PSP owner should be without.		
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
Medieval Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
A fantastic entry in the <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> series and one of the best games on PSP. Wonderful.		
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoLoRoIS	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Unplugged comes highly recommended. It's superb – there are few better rhythm-action games on the handheld.		
Rocky Balboa	150	68%

game	issue	score
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Very nearly as good as its PlayStation 3 counterpart. Which is a good thing because that's the best rally game money can buy.		
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
Soul Calibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
New modes and characters keep things interesting, while fights are as hectic and solid as ever.		
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Fantastic to look at and fast and fluid to play. <i>Tekken 6</i> is the best game of the series on PSP.		
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
The Con	153	59%
The Cube	153	64%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
The Godfather Mob Wars	136	66%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
The Sims 2	137	71%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord!? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
WipEout Pure	138	91%
Exceeding all of our expectations as to what a handheld <i>WipEout</i> game could be. <i>Pure</i> is an essential PSP purchase.		
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! Vs. RAW 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%

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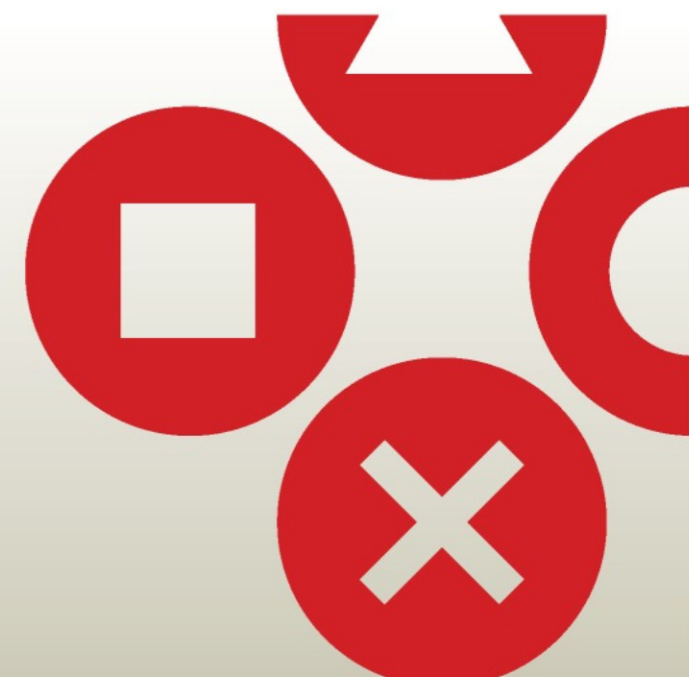
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AN APOLOGY

It has been brought to our attention that the word 'of' was missing from the last issue of Play – specifically in the standfirst of page 15. We would like to unreservedly apologise for this mistake. It was an oversight on our part and one for which the repercussions have been very severe indeed.

May those responsible rest in peace.

But we will never let you, our readers down. We will make it up to you. We will make it right. As such, every reader receives on this page a replacement 'of', absolutely free of charge and yours to use as you see fit. We did a bad – now, hopefully, we've made it good.



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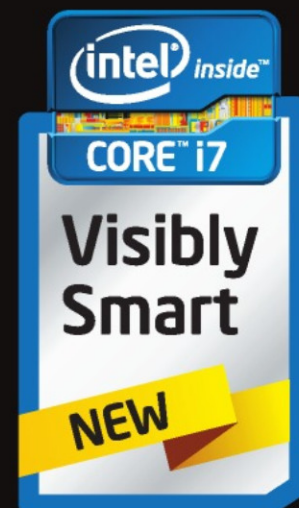


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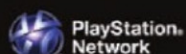


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